NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

SAUDI SECURITY: CHALLENGES FOR THE POST-SADDAM ERA

by

David M. Burke

March 2004

Thesis Advisor:	James A. Russell
Second Reader:	W. Andrew Terrill

Approved for public release, distribution is unlimited

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		*Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188*

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (*Leave blank*)	2. REPORT DATE March 2004	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE: Saudi Security: Challenges in the Post-Saddam Era		5. FUNDING NUMBERS
6. AUTHOR(S) David M. Burke, Captain, U.S. Air Force		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A		10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.		
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release, distribution is unlimited		12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE

13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

Events at the beginning of the 21st century have brought a fundamental change to the security environment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of a significance not witnessed in the region since the Iranian Revolution in 1979. The fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003 eliminated the most significant external threat facing Saudi Arabia. At the same time, internal threats to the Kingdom appear to be increasing. The demographic and economic challenges facing the Kingdom are contributing to internal instability. Increased instances of political violence, particularly suicide bombings against targets within the Kingdom, have been carried out by terrorists linked to al-Qaeda. These attacks have targeted Westerners and, for the first time in May 2003, non-Saudi Muslims.

This paper examines the security challenges facing Saudi Arabia at the start of the 21st century. It argues that while external threats to the Kingdom remain, the greater threat to security may lie within the Saudi state: the result of a failure to address current political realities. Major security challenges include the threat from Iran, economic and demographic pressures, the question of succession within the ruling al-Saud family and maintaining the U.S.-Saudi security partnership, a relationship which has endured over 50 years.

14. SUBJECT TERMS Saudi Arabia, Persian Gulf security.			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 68
			16. PRICE CODE
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239-18

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

SAUDI SECURITY: CHALLENGES IN THE POST-SADDAM ERA

David M. Burke
Captain, United States Air Force
B.A., College of Charleston, 1995
M.P.S., Auburn University Montgomery, 1998

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
March 2004

Author: David M. Burke

Approved by: James A. Russell
                 Thesis Advisor

                 W. Andrew Terrill
                 Second Reader

                 James J. Wirtz
                 Chairman, Department of National Security Affairs

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ABSTRACT

Events at the beginning of the 21st century have brought a fundamental change to the security environment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of a significance not witnessed in the region since the Iranian Revolution in 1979. The fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003 eliminated the most significant external threat facing Saudi Arabia. At the same time, internal threats to the Kingdom appear to be increasing. The demographic and economic challenges facing the Kingdom are contributing to internal instability. Increased instances of political violence, particularly suicide bombings against targets within the Kingdom, have been carried out by terrorists linked to al-Qaeda. These attacks have targeted Westerners and, for the first time in May 2003, non-Saudi Muslims.

This paper examines the security challenges facing Saudi Arabia at the start of the 21st century. It argues that while external threats to the Kingdom remain, the greater threat to security may lie within the Saudi state: the result of a failure to address current political realities. Major security challenges include the threat from Iran, economic and demographic pressures, the question of succession within the ruling al-Saud family and maintaining the U.S.-Saudi security partnership, a relationship which has endured over 50 years.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF TABLES

I. INTRODUCTION

A. NEW CENTURY, NEW CHALLENGES?

Events at the beginning of the 21st century have brought a fundamental change to the security environment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of a significance not witnessed in the region since the Iranian Revolution in 1979. The fall of Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime to the American led coalition in 2003 eliminated the most significant conventional military threat facing Saudi Arabia. In the aftermath, the large American military presence --in the Kingdom since August 1990 and justified by the Iraqi threat-- was drawn down, culminating with the U.S. moving its Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) from Prince Sultan Air Base to al-Udeid Air Base in Qatar. The fall of Saddam coupled with the continuing rapprochement between Riyadh and Tehran that began in the mid-1990's seem to have greatly reduced the external regional security threats facing the al-Saud.

At the same time, threats to the stability of the Kingdom from within appear to be increasing. In the aftermath of the September 11th attacks on the United States, initial Saudi support for the American led Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) was slow to materialize. Since then, increased instances of violence, particularly suicide bombings against targets within the Kingdom, have been carried out by terrorists linked to al-Qaeda. These attacks have targeted Westerners and, for the first time in May 2003, non-Saudi Muslims.

There are other significant internal issues that if not addressed, could negatively impact the long-term security of the regime. Demographic realities have placed great strains on Riyadh in recent years. These strains have manifested themselves through calls for reform in the Kingdom from both the liberal and conservative opposition to the al-Saud. The need for such reform has in turn led to division within the senior ranks of the al-Saud, Crown Prince Abdallah favoring reform while his Sudayri[1] half-brothers, led by Princes Nayef and Sultan generally opposing them.[2]

---

[1] The Sudayri Seven are the sons of King Abd al-Aziz and his wife Hassa bint Ahmad al-Sudayri. They are the current King Fahd and Princes Sultan, Abdul Rahman, Nayef, Turki, Salman and Ahmad.
[2] For more details of the division between Crown Prince Abdallah and Prince Nayef, see Michael Scott Doran, "The Saudi Paradox", *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 1 (Jan/Feb 2004).

Another security concern facing Riyadh at the beginning of the 21st century is the status of the U.S.-Saudi partnership. This 50-plus year relationship was greatly stressed in the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks. That 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudi citizens caused great consternation for both Washington and Riyadh. In the United States, the Saudis were portrayed in a negative light throughout the mainstream media. The public backlash against Saudi Arabia coupled with the revelation that in July 2002 the Defense Policy Board, an influential group consisting of foreign policy experts and former government officials that advises the Pentagon, had received a briefing by a former RAND corporation analyst titled: *Taking Saudi out of Arabia* that portrayed Saudi Arabia as the enemy of the United States marked a low point in U.S.-Saudi relations.[3] While relations at the highest level appear solid, the fact remains that the U.S.-Saudi relationship has undergone enormous scrutiny as of late. A weakening of American resolve to support the Kingdom would be a serious security concern for Riyadh.

B.   THESIS AND MAJOR ARGUMENTS

This paper examines the changing security challenges facing Saudi Arabia at the start of the 21st century. Externally, these challenges seem to be abating. Relations between Riyadh and Tehran have improved greatly over the last decade, however, the sheer size of Iran, in terms of geography and population, necessitate a watchful eye. Iraq faces a period of uncertainty; however, the United States military presence in the country for the near-term ameliorates any possible military threat there. Relations with Yemen, long considered a security threat by Saudi Arabia, seem to be on the mend with the signing of a border agreement between Riyadh and Sana'a in June 2000 as symbolic of the easing of tensions between the two countries. Internal security threats are another matter altogether.

The position of this paper is that while external threats to the Kingdom remain, the greater threat to security may lie within the Saudi state: the result of a failure to address current political realities. This position is prefaced with the condition that failure

---

[3] A copy of this briefing can be found on the Slate.com website. http://slate.msn.com/id/2069119/
(December 2003).

to address the issues raised by this paper in the short-term (the next few years) are not likely to result in the fall of the al-Saud. Over the next 15 to 20 years however, these issues could lead to substantial instability within the Kingdom and crisis within the ruling family.

The destruction of the Iraqi military has created a situation in the Persian Gulf toady where no country in the region has the conventional military capability to seriously threaten another. This coupled with a continuing sizable American military presence in the Persian Gulf as it deals with the task of Iraqi reconstruction will ensure regional stability under an American umbrella for the foreseeable future. Furthermore, the American presence will mitigate any potential non-conventional military threats Saudi Arabia might face.[4]

Iraq still presents a potential security challenge from a political perspective. The fall of the minority Sunni dominated Baathist regime has exposed the reality that Iraq may become a Shi'a state. Shi'a Islam is considered a heresy by the al-Saud, who are adherents to the Wahhabi sect of Sunni Islam and the presence of a Shi'a state on their border would pose serious political problems for them. Furthermore, should the American experiment in nation building succeed in bringing about a democratic government in Baghdad, the problems facing the al-Saud would be compounded. As the first Arab gulf state with a truly representative government, Shi'ite Iraq might serve as the impetus for rumblings from within the Shi'a population in the eastern part of the Kingdom. This is significant as the Shi'a populated areas in Eastern Saudi Arabia are where a majority of the Kingdom's oil reserves lay.[5]

Of greater concern to Riyadh would be a rise of discontent from the majority Sunni population in the Kingdom. A high birth rate, coupled with mediocre economic performance over the last twenty years has led to a serious decline in the standard of living for most Saudis. Increasing discontent among the population is further

---

[4] Such a reduced military threat environment of course will impact Saudi efforts to improve its military capabilities. While a valid concern, it is asserted here their existing capabilities are sufficient given the current state of the U.S.-Saudi relationship. A serious deterioration in relations might however send Riyadh in search of alternative solutions to ensure their security.

[5] Estimates on the size of the Shi'a population in Saudi Arabia range from three to twenty percent of total. Ten percent is the generally accepted figure.

compounded by the government's inability to provide basic services to some of its citizens. Much of the water and power infrastructure in the Kingdom is nearing the end of its service life and there is not enough money in government coffers for the capital investments necessary to correct these deficiencies.[6] Riyadh's continued inability to provide the standard of living expected by Saudi citizens have encouraged opponents of the regime to push for a greater say in the way affairs in the Kingdom are conducted. These calls for greater political participation are exacerbated by the moves of Saudi Arabia's neighbors, particularly Bahrain and Qatar, to liberalize their political systems and encourage participation from their citizens.

Managing the Saudi-U.S. relationship poses another political challenge for Riyadh as well. A fundamental tenant of Saudi security strategy has been the reliance on an external power for security guarantees, a role the United States took over from Great Britain after World War II. This partnership has benefited both parties over the last 50 years and despite the recent cooling of relations in the wake of the September 11th attacks, barring some extraordinary circumstances, there is no reason to believe this relationship is in jeopardy in the near-term. In the unlikely event relations deteriorate to a point where the al-Saud could not count on American security guarantees, they would be faced with the daunting task of finding another means of ensuring their security.[7]

C.   ORGANIZATION

This thesis is divided into four sections. Part one introduces the subject, providing some brief background into the areas that will be discussed. The thesis and major supporting arguments are introduced in this section as well, as is the overall organization of the paper.

---

[6] "Water Industries Market in Saudi Arabia" UK Trade and Investment Website http://www.tradepartners.gov.uk/water/saudi_arabia/profile/overview.shtml (November 2003).
[7] One possibility might be the acquisition of nuclear weapon deterrent capability. See Ewen MacAskill and Ian Traynor "Saudi's Consider Nuclear Bomb" *The Guardian*, 18 September 2003 http://www.guardian.co.uk/saudi/story/0,11599,1044402,00.html (December, 2003). Saudi statements on this issue however are likely only an attempt by Riyadh to remind Washington of the importance of their relationship. For an analysis on the possibility of Saudi Arabia becoming a nuclear state see Steven R. McDowell, "Is Saudi Arabia a Nuclear Threat?" M.A. Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2003, http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/research/theses/McDowell03.asp (December 2003).

Part two provides some detailed background on past trends in Saudi security. The security failures of the first two Saudi states will be examined, as their failures to adequately address political realities were a primary reason for their demise. The actions of King Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Saud (referred to henceforth as Abd al-Aziz) to correct these deficiencies as he created the modern Saudi state are highlighted. Several cases of Saudi handling of external and internal security challenges are examined to ascertain the success of Abd al-Aziz and his descendants in their endeavors not to make the mistakes of their predecessors.

Part three examines the major security challenges, external and internal, facing the Kingdom. Externally, the most potent threat comes from Iran. There also exist potential internal threats to the Kingdom's security. One issue is the question of succession within the al-Saud family. As it stands now, Crown Prince Abdallah will succeed King Fahd upon his death and Prince Sultan will become the heir apparent. After Prince Sultan however, there is less certainty. Another is the ability of Riyadh to deal with demographic, economic and political challenges in early 21st century. Higher oil prices over the last three years have enabled the al-Saud to put off addressing these very difficult issues, however, there are no guarantees they will remain high indefinitely. Lastly, the status of the U.S.-Saudi security relationship will be discussed as it is arguably impacts both internal and external security challenges facing the al-Saud.

Part four offers, based on the thesis research, some conclusions on Saudi security in the post-Saddam era to include possible courses of action by Riyadh to address the potential external and internal security threats they face. Any action Riyadh takes to address their security concerns are of great significance to Washington and it is likely that given the importance both parties place on the U.S.-Saudi partnership, the al-Saud will choose a path that will minimize damage to the relationship as long as they feel Washington's promise to ensure Saudi security is sincere.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

II.   HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A.   INTRODUCTION

On the 22nd of September, 1932, the unification of the Arabian Peninsula under the rule of King Abd al-Aziz was signified by changing the name of the country to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia[8], creating the modern Saudi state we know today. This however, was not a creation but a recreation of the Saudi state that had existed twice before. These former Saudi states (1745-1818 and 1824-1891) fell primarily as a result of a failure to adjust its external security polices in relation to foreign powers. This chapter begins with studies of security failures; specifically, the fall of the two earlier Saudi states. These mistakes were not lost on King Abd al-Aziz, who introduced a level of pragmatism into Saudi security that prior to his rule had not been seen. Some results from Abd al-Aziz's efforts follow next, through selected case studies of the Kingdom's responses to several security challenges.

B.   SAUDI SECURITY FAILURES: FORMER SAUDI STATES
1.   The First Saudi State (1745-1818)

The first Saudi state was established in the aftermath of an alliance between Muhammad ibn Saud, the former Amir of Dar'iya, and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the leader of an Islamic revivalist movement known outside of Saudi Arabia today as Wahhabism.[9] This alliance between religious and secular authority enabled Muhammad ibn Saud to rise to power and has remained a predominant characteristic of the Saudi state today. Wahhabism served to unify the various tribes while the military power of the al-Saud was employed to spread the new faith through force. Proselytism, conquest and expansion were the driving factors shaping the security policy of the first Saudi state. Expansion occurred quickly; by 1765 the entire Najd had been conquered. From there, it spread out across most of central Arabia and by 1790, all of the Arabian Peninsula save

---

[8] Prior to this date, Abd al-Aziz was known by the title of "King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Najd and Its Dependencies"

[9] Followers of Wahhabism are called Wahhabis though it should be noted that adherents to the faith find the term derogatory, as it infers a worship of Muhammad ibn Adb al-Wahhab, which would be in direct contradiction to their puritanical beliefs. They refer to themselves as *Muwahhidin* (Unitarians). See David E Long, *The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 23.

the Hejaz fell under al-Saud rule. The al-Saud then turned their attention north, attacking Ottoman territories in Iraq. It was this activity that first caught the attention of Istanbul. In 1798, the Ottoman governor of Baghdad was directed to raise an army to capture the Saudi capital at Dar'iya. The expedition failed, however, and the Ottomans withdrew after concluding a truce with the al-Saud.

The Saudi's assessment of these events led them to draw several erroneous conclusions that in the end were disastrous for them. First, they chose not to dwell on the reasons why the Ottomans dispatched a force against them, focusing instead on the poor performance of the Ottoman troops. This led the al-Saud to a hasty generalization of Ottoman military capabilities. The second conclusion was that their cause was a just one. It was God's will that enabled them to succeed so quickly in their campaigns. These conclusions led to a lack of respect towards the Ottomans, which emboldened the al-Saud and they quickly resumed their attacks against Ottoman possessions in Iraq, Syria and also the Hejaz. In 1801, they attacked Karbala, in southern Iraq, a city sacred to Shi'a Muslims. Thousands of people were massacred and several of the cities' shrines, including the tomb of Hussein, grandson of the Prophet Muhammad were destroyed. By 1803, they had gained control of the holy cites of Mecca and Medina, where again shrines were destroyed. Even the tomb of the Prophet was not spared; it was plundered by the Wahhabis and the tomb itself barely escaped destruction.[10]

The loss of Mecca and Medina to the Wahhabis was a serious blow to the stature of the Ottoman Sultan. Aside from being the ruler of an empire, the Sultan was also acknowledged as Caliph, the leader of all Muslims. That the two holiest sites in Islam were under the control of a religious sect was considered by most Muslims of the time to be heretical and could not be allowed to stand. In 1811, the Sublime Porte decided to put an end to the Wahhabi affront. Sultan Mahmud II instructed the viceroy of Egypt, Muhammad Ali, to send a military force against the Wahhabis and retake the Hejaz. By October 1812, the Egyptian force had retaken Medina. Within three months, Mecca and the rest of Hejaz were reclaimed from the Wahhabis. In 1815, the al-Saud reached an agreement with Muhammad Ali that ended the fighting.[11] The Porte, not content with

---

[10] Long, 24.
[11] Harry St. John Philby, *Sa'udi Arabia* (New York: Fredrick A. Praeger, 1955), 132.

only the expulsion of the Wahhabis from Hejaz, rejected this arrangement and in 1816 ordered their viceroy to resume the campaign against the Wahhabis in central Arabia to destroy them once and for all. By 1818, the Egyptian forces, led by Muhammad Ali's son Ibrahim Pasha, had reached the al-Saud capital of Dar'iya. After a six month siege, the Wahhabis surrendered. The Saudi leader, Abdallah, was taken before the Ottoman Sultan in Istanbul where he was executed.[12]

The first Saudi state was destroyed for several reasons, all stemming from a failure to assess its external security policies in relation to foreign powers. The al-Saud had disregarded the political realties of the day. As the Saudis expanded outward from the central Arabian Peninsula, they considered all surrounding territories ripe for conquest; no thought was given to the fact that some of these territories were important to their Ottoman neighbors and that losing them would not be tolerated.

Once the Ottomans began their campaign against the Saudi state, the al-Saud made their second mistake; they failed to elicit support from another foreign power in the struggle against the Ottomans. Though at the time the British were allied with the Ottomans, they would have been an obvious choice given their interests in the Persian Gulf littoral. Despite this, the Saudi's made no attempt to get Britain to intervene on their behalf with the Ottomans.[13]

Lastly, the Saudis failed to adequately assess their own military strength and their ability for continued expansion. When the military superiority of the advancing Ottoman army from Egypt was finally recognized, the Saudis agreed to accept Ottoman rule. By this time, however, it was too late. The Ottomans had decided to destroy the Wahabbi threat.[14]   Had the Saudis correctly assessed their external security situation and determined that pursuit of an expansionist policy fueled by Wahhabi ideology would run them afoul of their Ottoman neighbors; a tempering of that policy might have resulted and the first Saudi state may have endured.

---

[12] Ibid., 145.
[13] Jacob Goldberg, *The Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia: The Formative Years, 1902-1918* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1986), 16.
[14] Ibid., 17.

2.   The Second Saudi State (1824-1891)

By 1819, the vast majority of the Egyptian forces used to defeat the al-Saud had left Arabia. Ibrahim Pasha had installed a leader of a rival tribe as the representative for the Ottoman government. Under this reduced military presence, the al-Saud were able to regroup and in 1824, Turki Ibn Abdallah (grandson of Muhammad Ibn Saud), rallied the local tribesmen under the Wahhabi banner and drove the remaining Egyptian forces out of Najd, creating a new Saudi state. Turki established the capital of his new state not at the old site in Dar'iya but in Riyadh, site of the current Saudi capital.

After consolidating his positions in Najd, Turki began a campaign to reconquer former Wahhabi territories in eastern Arabia. This continued until 1834 when Turki was assassinated emerging from a mosque after Friday prayers.[15] Turki's son, Faisal was then proclaimed ruler. In 1835, Muhammad Ali, who four years earlier had turned on his Ottoman masters and begun a period of Egyptian expansion, asked Faisal to join forces with him in a campaign in southwest Arabia. When Faisal refused, Muhammad Ali decided that a more pliant ruler in Arabia was needed. In 1838, he again sent an Egyptian force against the al-Saud, this time led by Faisal's cousin Khalid, who had been imprisoned in Cairo and who successfully removed Faisal from power. A reduced Saudi state was ruled by Khalid (1838-42) and then Abdallah ibn Thunayan (1842-43) who overthrew Khalid.

In 1843, Faisal, who had escaped from prison, returned and reclaimed the Saudi throne. This period of his rule (1843-65) marked the high point of the second Saudi state. Faisal, upon his return, attempted to reassert al-Saud hegemony over all their former possessions. During this period of his reign he was able to restore order to Najd and expanded the borders of the Saudi state northwards to Jabel Shammar and south to the border of Oman.[16]

As Faisal continued his expansionist policy in the east, it was inevitable his designs on Arabia would conflict with the plans of the British, at the time the dominant maritime power in the Persian Gulf. The al-Saud found themselves in alliance with

---

[15] Philby, 167.
[16] Long, 27.

pirates operating along the southern coast of the Persian Gulf. Wahhabi threats against the coastal sheikdoms forced the British, on more than one occasion, to use displays of force to convince the al-Saud of British resolve in these matters. It wasn't until 1866, when a British naval force destroyed several Saudi forts on the Persian Gulf coast near Dammam that the Saudis realized both the military supremacy of the British, and the depth of their commitment to protect their regional interests.

Faisal's reign ended with his death in 1865. He was followed by his son Abdallah (1866-70, 1875-89). This period in the history of the second Saudi state was marked with internal fighting between Abdallah and his brother Saud for control. Saud ousted Abdallah in 1870. In order to regain his throne, Abdallah asked the Ottomans for support against his brother. The Ottomans, who prior to Abdallah's invitation had exercised little control over central Arabia, were only too happy to support Abdallah. Traveling south from Baghdad with an Ottoman army, they took control of Hasa, and to the chagrin of Abdallah, stopped. Control of Hasa caused the loss of all of the al-Saud territories in eastern and southeastern Arabia. It also cut them off from the coast, placing the Ottomans in control of vital trade routes into central Arabia.[17] Despite this grave threat to the al-Saud, Faisal and Saud continued their civil war. This continuous infighting weakened the al-Saud to the point where another prominent Najdi tribe, the al-Rashid, were able to challenge the al-Saud for control of Arabia. In 1891, the al-Rashid forced the al-Saud to leave the Najd and seek refuge in Kuwait.

The internecine conflicts within the al-Saud certainly stand as a primary cause for the fall of the second Saudi state; however it is apparent as well that foreign policy mistakes made by the leaders of the first state vis-à-vis security were repeated by the second. Had they contemplated the current political realities during the ninetieth century, they might have been able to cultivate arrangements with other powers that could have ensured the security of the al-Saud state. Faisal's lack of respect for the capabilities of the Ottomans and the Egyptians are particularly hard to comprehend. After all, only twenty years had passed since the destruction of the first Saudi state by Ibrahim Pasha's army. Nothing had changed in terms of the military balance of power between the Wahhabis and the Egyptians that could have caused Faisal to question the overwhelming superiority

---

[17] Goldberg, 26.

of the Egyptian forces. Refusing Muhammad Ali's demand to join his campaign against Asir Province in 1836 was tantamount to an invitation to invade, as it impeded his expansionist goals.

The lack of understanding of British policy in the Persian Gulf was another major security failure. The British were the predominant power in the Gulf and a primary concern for London was to maintain maritime peace. Again the al-Saud failed to seek the assistance of another great power to support them against the Ottomans and the Egyptians. At the very least, the al-Saud should have tempered its activities in relation to British objectives. Their support of Qasimi pirates operating from the ports of Sharja and Ras al-Khamia along the Trucial Coast coupled with sporadic harassment of the Bahraini and Omani sheikdoms directly contradicted British interests. Past Saudi activities along the Persian Gulf littoral caused enough problems for the British that when Saud finally asked for support against Abdallah and his Ottoman allies, London declined.

In the end, while differences existed between the first two Saudi states, the policies of both pertaining to security matters looked remarkably similar. Al-Saud infighting present during the second Saudi state ensured its relative weakness vis-à-vis the British, Egyptians and the Ottomans. While attempts to inject realpolitik into Saudi security calculations were made, particularly concerning the British and the Ottomans, they were often too little, too late. Overall, it was the failure of the al-Saud to correctly assess the world around them that led them to devise security strategies that were diametrically opposed to the political realities of the day. These lessons would be heeded by Abd al-Aziz as he set out on his campaign to create what is today the modern Saudi state.

C.   SECURITY CASE STUDIES IN THE MODERN SAUDI STATE
1.   Breaking the Cycle: Abd Al-Aziz

In January 1902, a young Abd al-Aziz led a force of sixty men into Riyadh and against all odds, succeeded in overcoming the fort's garrison, once again establishing al-Saud control over Riyadh, signaling the birth of the modern Saudi state. The period from 1902 through the 1920s saw Abd al-Aziz expanding his control across the Najd, again

bringing the territory under al-Saud rule. The campaigns of Abd al-Aziz led many to believe that this new Saudi state would continue the expansionist policies of the two previous states; that this state would make the same political miscalculations that resulted in the destruction of the two prior Wahhabi states. Most observers by 1932 however, realized that this ruler would lead his state along a different path. Throughout the period of expansion (1902-1930), there were indications the mistakes of the past were not going to be repeated. Abd al-Aziz had introduced pragmatism into al-Saud security calculations that heretofore had not been present.

Early on in Abd al-Aziz's campaigns, he realized a major internal threat to al-Saud rule was the internecine fighting amongst the family for greater power. Rivals for the throne from other branches of the family such as the Jiluwi and Saud al-Kabir had to be brought into the fold to ensure stability and continued al-Saud rule. Abd al-Aziz employed different strategies to achieve this goal. One was a pattern of intermarriage between family branches. A notable example was Abd al-Aziz marrying his sister Nura to Saud bin Abd al-Aziz bin Saud al-Kabir, a leading rival from the senior branch of the family. This action gave the Saud al-Kabir a permanent interest in the throne remaining within the al-Saud branch of the family. Another tactic he employed was the appointment of senior members of other family branches to key posts. For instance, the members of the Jiluwi family have traditionally governed key provinces in the Kingdom, to include Hasa, the eastern province where the majority of Saudi oil is located.[18] The co-opting of these rival family branches early on in the development of the Kingdom played a major role in reducing family infighting and also aided in ameliorating succession challenges.

Abd al-Aziz's pragmatism rectified another mistake made by his predecessors; the hesitancy to entertain alliances with foreign powers to enhance security. As he went about rebuilding the Saudi state, he cultivated relations with the British. As the predominant foreign power in the region, he realized that al-Saud machinations must not run counter to British aims in the region. Even after the duplicity of British promises to the Arabs during World War I had been exposed, the pragmatic Abd al-Aziz knew that in

---

[18] For additional details, see Joesph Kechichian, *Succession in Saudi Arabia* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 4-5. It should be noted that in 1985, King Fahd replaced the Jiluwi governor of Hasa with one of his sons, Muhammad bin Fahd. However, Jiluwis continue to rule key cities in Hasa, along with the Northern Province.

the end he had to be a friend to the British because he could not survive as Britain's enemy. This sentiment was reflected in a statement made to Amin Rihani about the British in 1922:

> They spin and spin—spin nets for me. When the *Inglaiz* (English) want something, they get it. When we want something we have to fight for it. What I cede of my rights under force I will get back when I have sufficient force, *inshallah*.[19]

While not the ideal arrangement from the point of view of Abd al-Aziz, allying himself with the British paid off during his campaign to retake the Hejaz. The current rulers of Hejaz, the Hashemites, had been supported by the British during World War I. It was after all the Sharif of Mecca, King Hussein, who led the Arab revolt against the Sultan that facilitated British General Edmund Allenby's 1917 offensive against Ottoman positions in Palestine. In 1924, Abd al-Aziz moved on the Hejaz after King Hussein claimed the title of Caliph, which had been held by the rulers of the now defunct Ottoman Empire. After the first battle at Taif, Abd al-Aziz received a cable from London from which he inferred King Hussein would receive no aid from the British and that London would view his campaign into the Hejaz as an internal Arabian matter.[20] Without British support, the Hejaz quickly fell to Abd al-Aziz, and with relatively few casualties. This tacit British support certainty aided Abd al-Aziz in his efforts to rebuild the Saudi state. His strategy of maintaining close relations with a strong foreign power remains a fundamental tenant of Saudi security to this day.

The pragmatism displayed by Abd al-Aziz, both in dealing with internal and external threats did not come without costs. In 1929, he was faced with the greatest crisis of his rule; the *Ikhwan* rebellion. The *Ikhwan* (brethren) had been created through Abd al-Aziz's efforts to win over Bedouin tribal leaders and obtain their loyalty to him and his cause. Abd al-Aziz supported the *Ikhwan* with land, resources, and money, as well as arms and ammunition. A mosque was built in each community, which aided in exposing them to Wahhabi teachings. The *Ikhwan* became dedicated followers whose fighting prowess was matched only by their religious devotion. Abd al-Aziz's efforts were so successful that by 1915, he had more than 60,000 of these *Ikhwan* available to use in his

---

[19] Robert Lacey, *The Kingdom* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), 136.
[20] Ibid., 188.

battles to unite the peninsula. Discipline however, was not one of their strong traits. Only through great leadership and charisma was Abd al-Aziz able to keep them reigned in.[21]

The *Ikhwan* enjoyed many successes; however, their actions were beginning to have political costs vis-à-vis Abd al-Aziz's relations with the British. He sent the *Ikhwan* against the al-Rashid stronghold at Hail, which was captured with little difficulty in 1921 after discovering they were in discussions with Sharif Hussein about forming a military alliance. Emboldened by their success, the *Ikhwan* disregarded orders and crossed the border into Transjordan. The raiding of their Hashemite ally angered the British, who counterattacked with devastating effect, using armored cars and aircraft. Other *Ikhwan* expeditions succeeded in conquering Asir, an independent territory in the southwest. In defiance of Abd al-Aziz's authority however, they continued to raid British protectorates. Recognizing that these unsanctioned raids might provide a potential source of danger to his leadership, Abd al-Aziz began to form a more conventional and more disciplined army.

By 1928 Abd al-Aziz had to deal with the rebellious *Ikhwan*. Led by Faisal al-Dawish, they regarded both the modernization pursued by Abd al-Aziz and his alliance with the British as a betrayal of Wahhabi principles. Renewed *Ikhwan* raids in Iraq troubled the British because they posed a threat to their oil interests there.[22] Attacks against fellow Najdis were the last straw and finally forced Abd al Aziz to eliminate the *Ikhwan* threat. Abd al-Aziz lead his new army, comprised primarily of townsmen and loyal Utaibah tribesmen which was supported by a fleet of motor cars symbolic of the modernization that the *Ikhwan* despised. In 1929 Abd al-Aziz routed the rebel *Ikhwan* at Sabillah, in a battle that was over in less than half an hour.

Abd al-Aziz during his campaign against the *Ikhwan* never forgot the importance of the alliance between spiritual and temporal power, both as a unifying force and its impact on legitimizing al-Saud rule. During the 1930s, he allowed the remaining *Ikhwan* to regroup as a Bedouin militia. They became known as the White Army because they wore traditional white robes rather than military uniforms. For Abd al-Aziz, the White Army served as a counterbalance to the small regular army, thereby helping to ensure his

---

[21] David Holden and Richard Johns, *The House of Saud: The Rise and Rule of the Most Powerful Dynasty in the Arab World* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981), 88.
[22] Ibid., 92.

control over internal security. This force was the nucleus from which the modern day Saudi Arabian National Guard evolved.[23]

2.   Tumultuous Times: The Rule of King Saud (1958-64)[24]

The most serious internal challenge faced by the al-Saud came in 1958. It was a crisis of multiple dimensions, however, the root causes rested in matters of security. Saud, who had been the choice of King Abd al-Aziz to succeed him since the mid 1930's,[25] managed to create a situation where the Kingdom, despite ever increasing oil revenue, was facing a financial catastrophe. Public expenditures, massive corruption, and the extravagant spending patterns of King Saud brought high inflation and a large public debt. The value of the Kingdom's currency, the Riyal (SR), against the dollar fell from SR 3.75 to SR 6.4 as a result of gross economic mismanagement.[26]

Fiscal irresponsibility was only part of the problem however. Saud's mismanagement of policies with regional neighbors and the United States created a situation where the Kingdom suddenly found itself isolated. In February 1958, the Kingdoms of Jordan and Iraq, both ruled by Hashemites, issued a proclamation establishing a federation to be called the Arab Union.[27] In March, Yemen, a country long considered a security threat to the Kingdom, proclaimed it would join Nasser's United Arab Republic, establishing a foothold on the Arabian Peninsula for his Arab nationalist ideology. It wasn't long before pamphlets of Nasser's nationalist propaganda were found circulating in the *souks* (markets) in Riyadh. Cairo Radio's *Sawt al-Arab* (Voice of the Arabs) often broadcast anti-monarchial messages that resonated with Arab immigrants in the Kingdom as well.

---

[23] During the same time, Abd al-Aziz created an additional military force, the Royal Guard, whose sole function was to protect the King and Royal Family.

[24] Saud's reign actually started upon the death of his father Abd al-Aziz on 9 November, 1953. It wasn't until 1958 that serious problems began to surface.

[25] There is evidence that in the last years of King Abd al-Aziz's life, he began to question his son Saud's judgment. In one instance, Abd al-Aziz berated Saud upon learning he was building a modern palace for himself instead of one made from traditional materials. In another report, Abd al-Aziz brought his oldest sons Saud and Faisal together shortly before his death. He asked Faisal to pledge his loyalty to Saud, which he did. He then asked Saud to do the same to Faisal, and to listen to his younger brother because he was smarter. See Parker T. Hart, *Saudi Arabia and the United States: Birth of a Security Partnership* (Bloominton & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), 97-98.

[26] Lacey, 320.

[27] The Arab Union proved to be very short lived. It was declared on 14 February 1958. In July of the same year, King Faisal II of Iraq was overthrown in a bloody coup by Baathists led by General Qasim.

The senior members of the family felt embarrassed, humiliated and threatened. Saud had largely left them out of his decision making process; yet his carelessness and bad judgment threatened the whole family.[28] In March 1958 nine of King Saud's brothers met to decide on a course of action to address the crises at hand. In the end, it was decided that Saud must transfer executive authority over to his brother Faisal, the Heir Apparent. Saud would then be allowed to retain the throne. The plan was submitted to the King on 22 March 1958, who accepted it with little resistance.[29]

With the requisite authority in hand, Faisal went about mending the Kingdom's affairs. Realizing the threat Arab nationalism posed to the security of the al-Saud, he sought to appease Nasser while at the same time maintaining Saudi ties to the West, particularly the United States.[30] Using his well honed diplomatic skills, he was able to repair much of the damage to relations with his Arab neighbors. On fiscal matters, Faisal managed to balance the budget and restore the value of the Riyal. All of this was done in just two years. Faisal's quick successes however, brought new problems. Saud, in seeing his younger brother competently manage the Kingdom's affairs, decided that running the country wasn't difficult after all. On 21 December 1960, Saud reclaimed the powers delegated to Faisal just two years earlier.

Saud's actions led to a split among the sons of Abd al-Aziz. Talal, who was now finance minister, tried in vain to keep the renewed lavish spending habits of the King in check. Eight months after Saud's return, Talal resigned. In 1961 after publicly espousing support for Nasser's "Revolution" he was labeled by the family a traitor. Saud and his brother Abdallah responded to Talal's retorts publicly as well. Only a century after the family infighting that led to the fall of the second Saudi state, sons of Abd al-Aziz were engaged in open feuding. Back in Cairo, Nasser relished the al-Saud infighting, as he for several years had been predicting the fall of the regime. When revolutionaries in Yemen on 26 September 1962 overthrew the royal family, it seemed that perhaps, the days of al-Saud rule in Riyadh were numbered.

---

28 Lacey, 321.
29 Ibid., 322.
30 Kechichian, 94.

Saud's inability to control the family feuding led senior al-Saud family members and the *ulema* (religious leadership) to take action. They decided that Faisal must be brought back to head what would be called an emergency war cabinet.[31] The introduction by Nasser into Yemen of thousands of troops to support the rebels constituted a serious military threat on the Kingdom's border. Faisal's first action was to form a new government that excluded the sons of King Saud, as well as several of his civilian advisors that had supported the new Yemen Arab Republic. Faisal selected replacements from brothers loyal to him to head up key governmental positions; Khalid was named deputy Prime Minister, Abdallah was made commander of the National Guard, Sultan became Defense Minister, Fahd was selected to run the Interior Ministry and Salman was named governor of Riyadh.[32] It appeared the al-Saud ruling consensus was now restored and as events in Yemen progressed throughout 1963, it seemed that the external security threat to the regime had been weathered. However, there would be one final internal challenge for Faisal to face before this period of crisis could be closed.

King Saud had now been forced for the second time to cede executive power to his younger brother.[33] It was evident he would never be satisfied being little more than a figurehead. Twice now he had revoked Faisal's authority and in late 1963, he made an attempt do this once more. In November 1963, Saud refused to approve the annual budget submitted by Faisal's government. Faisal, as President of the Council of Ministers, used his executive authority to pass the budget anyway. Saud departed on a tour of the Kingdom with the plan to garner popular support that would enable him to regain his powers. This attempt by Saud to force his brother's hand led to a mobilization of the Kingdom's military forces. Saud ordered the Royal Guard to take up positions around his palace at Nasriyah while in response, Sultan placed the armed forces on alert and Abdallah mobilized the National Guard.[34] On Faisal's orders the commander of the Royal Guards was arrested by National Guard elements in March 1964; with this action, the last military support for Saud had been removed. Saud was asked again to accept a ceremonial position as head of state and leave executive authority in Faisal's hands. He

---

[31] Lacey, 344.
[32] Ibid., 345.
[33] In November 1961, Saud voluntarily gave power to Faisal while he made an extended trip abroad to receive medical attention.
[34] Ibid., 351.

refused and in October 1964, a *fatwa* (religious ruling) was issued by the *ulema* proclaiming Faisal king. On 3 November, Saud formally abdicated.

Faisal's ascension to the throne marked the close of this period of crises. The family, once again united behind Faisal was now again able to focus on managing the affairs of the Kingdom. The end result of his efforts to eliminate external and internal threats to the security of the al-Saud had the desired effects of enhancing the security of the country and strengthening al-Saud rule. For the greatest testament to his success one only has to look to the partnership he formed in 1962 with his brothers Fahd, Abdallah, Sultan and Salman. Of the four, three remain in the same positions today with Abdallah serving in an additional role as the Heir Apparent. Only the position of Fahd has changed; he is now King[35].

3.   The Saudi Shi'a: Internal Threats to Oil Resources

The oil strike at the Dammam No. 7 well on 4 March 1938 and subsequent discovery of substantial oil reserves in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom almost overnight elevated the importance of the region to the al-Saud. It also elevated the importance of a security challenge within the Kingdom; sectarian relations between the Wahhabis and the Shi'a. In a state ruled by the Wahhabi al-Saud, the Shi'a were treated as second-class citizens. Ironically, it was this disparity that led many of the Shi'a in the Eastern Province to work for the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO).[36] Denied significant opportunities for advancement in a Wahhabi dominated society, they flocked to ARAMCO and by the early 1950's, they comprised about 40 percent of the workforce in the oil industry. The heavy Shi'a presence in the oil industry gave them new leverage and opportunity to press their demands for greater rights and privileges within the Kingdom. For the al-Saud, this presence posed a potential security threat to a vital resource.

In May 1953, the Shi'a used this leverage and presented to ARAMCO a petition demanding higher wages, better living conditions and more privileges.[37] After months of

---

[35] King Fahd suffered a debilitating stroke in 1995 and ruling authority was transferred to the Heir Apparent Abdallah in the aftermath. While officially Fahd resumed his duties after a short recovery period, in reality, Abdallah has run the affairs of state ever since.
[36] ARAMCO's workforce also included significant numbers of expatriate workers, to include Palestinian refugees.
[37] Holden and Johns, 168.

talks between the leaders of the workers and ARAMCO officials, the Saudi government intervened. In early October 1953, after the leaders of the workers refused to cooperate with the government inquiry into their grievances, they were imprisoned. The following day, violent protests erupted; a police station was attacked, and several ARAMCO vehicles were damaged. A strike by more than 17,000 of ARAMCO's 19,000 workers shut down the production of oil for three weeks. In response, the al-Saud dispatched 5000 troops to the area to guard key oil installations.[38] Fortunately, neither side wished to see an escalation of the confrontation and by the end of the third week of the strike, most of the workers had returned to their jobs.

By 1956, the Arab nationalist rhetoric emanating out of Egypt had become a serious security concern for the al-Saud. Nasser's anti-imperialist message resonated within the Shi'a and expatriate Arab communities in the Eastern Province, and Riyadh was worried. In May of the same year, another period of Shi'a unrest began. During a visit to the Eastern Province by Kind Saud, ARAMCO workers staged a three day strike. Protesters carried signs denouncing imperialism and demanded greater rights for workers.[39] The strike was ended by force on orders from the provincial governor Saud bin Jiluwi. Three workers were beaten to death by security forces and over 200 men were arrested.[40] Strikes continued through the summer culminating in riots after President Nasser's visit to Dhahran in September the same year.

Shi'a unrest abated during the 1960's but with the advent of higher oil prices in the 1970's tensions resurfaced when calls for a more equitable distribution of oil revenues were made. Again the response of the al-Saud was heavy handed. Thousands of Shi'a were arrested after demonstrating for more rights and a greater share of oil revenues. By the mid 1970's however, the al-Saud realized repression alone would not ensure their security interests. Under the rule of King Khalid, significant financial resources were allocated to improve the condition of the Shi'a in the Eastern Province. For the first time, significant numbers of Shi'a were placed into government positions.[41]

---

[38] Ibid.
[39] Kechichian, 98.
[40] Holden and Johns, 188.
[41] Kechichian, 99.

Progress in mending relations between the al-Saud and their Shi'a subjects was stalled in the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Ayatollah Khomeni's call to export the Islamic Revolution certainly was a cause for alarm in Riyadh. Tensions increased, creating an environment where the al-Saud believed force would be necessary to restore order. On 28 November 1979, Shi'a in several towns in the Eastern Province attempted to observe *Ashura*[42] publicly. When Saudi security forces intervened, rioting broke out, resulting in several fatalities. Just three months later in February, 1980 rioting again occurred in the town of Qatif. Demands were made to redistribute the oil wealth so that the Shi'a would receive a more equitable share. To the al-Saud, these incidents conjured up thoughts of a rebellion by disaffected Shi'a in the Eastern Province, perhaps supported by the fellow Shi'a in neighboring countries that would cripple the Kingdom's oil industry.

Throughout the 1980's the al-Saud pursued a security policy towards the Shi'a that employed carrots and sticks. Massive investment into infrastructure in the province was made and the al-Saud even contemplated the possibility of political reforms. The start of the Iran-Iraq War in September 1980 however saw Riyadh move additional security forces into the province to protect key oil facilities as a precaution against potential Shi'a unrest. From 1981 to 1985, surveillance of Shi'a increased dramatically, as did periodic detentions and interrogations of people suspected of involvement in subversive activities.[43]

Since the 1990's the Eastern Province has remained relatively stable, due in part to increased dialogue between the al-Saud and Shi'a leaders. Given the importance of the region's oil resources to Riyadh, it seemed imperative that these relations improve.[44]

---

[42] *Ashura* is an annual ritual in Shi'a Islam that marks the final day of the dramatic events of 1-10 Muharram, 61 AH (8-17 May 681 AD) in Islamic history. Narratives are recited that tell the story of the martyrdom of Hussein, the oldest son of Ali at the hands of the Umayyad Caliph Yazid near Karbala (Southern Iraq). After the recitation of the narrative, many Shi'a engage in public acts of uncontrollable wailing and self-flagellation. Such displays would be abhorred by Wahhabis, as they are perceived to venerate the life of a man, not God.

[43] Shahram Chubin and Charles Tripp, *Iran-Saudi Arabia Relations and Regional Order* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 16.

[44] Kechichian, 99.

Additionally, the rapprochement between Riyadh and Tehran that began in the mid-1990's helped to decrease tensions. While there are still reports of repression against the Shi'a by the al-Saud,[45] from a security standpoint, the threat to the Kingdom's oil resources in the Eastern Province from Shi'a unrest today is low.

4.   The Iraqi Threat to Saudi Security

The status of relations with Baghdad has greatly influenced Saudi Arabian security perceptions over the last 80 years. A creation of the British in the aftermath of World War I, Iraq was cobbled together from three former Ottoman provinces.[46] In 1921, the British established Iraq as a kingdom and installed Faisal, one of the sons of Sharif Hussein of Mecca as the ruler. Abd al-Aziz'z conquest of the Hejaz in 1926 ensured that his relations with the new Hashemite kingdom to the north would be troublesome. From a Saudi security perspective however, the impact of the historical feuding between the al-Saud and Hashemites was minimal. Saudi Arabia and Iraq both played a role in supporting British security interests in the region and Iraq for all intents and purposes was being administered for the British by Faisal. There would be no major security threat facing the al-Saud from the north.

This all changed in 1958, when a military coup led by Brigadier General Abd al-Karim Qasim violently deposed the ruling monarchy. From the perspective of Saudi Arabia, the events in Iraq were seen as a potentially serious security threat. Iraq would now be viewed in the same light as Egypt, a country governed by an anti-monarchial, Arab nationalist leader. In view of the trouble Nasser's Arab nationalist rhetoric was making for the al-Saud inside Saudi Arabia and elsewhere on the Arabian Peninsula, the appearance of another Arab nationalist state on their border was cause for alarm.

To combat this new threat, Saudi Arabia sought to align itself more closely with the United States. One result of this strategy was Saudi support for the Eisenhower Doctrine. Declared in a message to the U.S. Congress in 1957, the President recommended the use of American forces to protect Middle East countries from overt aggression from communist nations. For the al-Saud, this was an ideal arrangement to

---

[45] The Human Rights Watch World Report 2001 for Saudi Arabia indicate several instances of discrimination against Shi'a in the Kingdom, to include limitations on religious practices and the banning of books on Shi'a Jurisprudence. A full copy of the report is available at http://www.hrw.org/wr2k1/mideast/saudi.html (February 2004).
[46] These were the Basra, Baghdad, and Kirkuk provinces.

allow them to draw closer to the U.S. without further antagonizing anti-imperialist sentiments in the Kingdom, as they could oppose communists on the grounds of their avowed atheism, a position that could be justified in the minds of Wahhabis.

Because of its increasing political isolation, by 1975, Iraq had begun to moderate its policies of supporting nationalist liberation movements in the region. Riyadh responded positively to these developments, sending a delegation to Baghdad led by Heir Apparent Fahd to discuss mutual security concerns in the Gulf. On 2 July 1975, Riyadh announced that an agreement on the status of the Iraq-Saudi Neutral Zone had been concluded. [47] In 1979, the Camp David Accords and the Iranian Revolution pushed Riyadh and Baghdad closer together. Given the potential threat both faced from their Shi'a populations should they be stirred into revolt by Khomeini's calls for exporting the revolution, Riyadh felt their security vis-à-vis Iran would be enhanced through a security alliance with Iraq.

When the Iran-Iraq War started in September 1980, Saudi Arabia supported Iraq's actions in the hope that the Iranian threat to the region would be greatly reduced.[48] Riyadh's support to Saddam Hussein's war efforts came in many different forms. For instance, during the eight-year long conflict, Saudi Arabia provided Iraq with an estimated U.S. $25 billion in low-interest loans and grants, made up for lost Iraqi oil production by providing Baghdad's customers part of its production from oil fields in the Iraq-Saudi Arabian Neutral Zone, and assisted with the construction of an oil pipeline to transport Iraqi oil across its territory to reduce the impact of Iranian attacks against Iraqi oil shipments by tanker through the Strait of Hormuz.

Any thoughts of a long-term security alliance with Baghdad evaporated with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990. The massive numbers of Iraqi troops along the Saudi-Kuwaiti border posed a direct security threat to the Kingdom; one which Riyadh knew it could not manage on its own. The seriousness of the Iraqi threat

---

[47] Robert Litwak, *Security in the Persian Gulf 2: Sources of Interstate Conflict* (New Jersey: Allenheld, Osmun & Co for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981) 33. The Neutral Zones (Iraq-Saudi Arabia, Kuwait-Saudi Arabia) were originally established to allow for migration of Bedouin tribes within the area. The Saudi-Kuwaiti Neutral Zone was demarcated with an official border between the two countries in 1966.
[48] Joseph A. Kechichian, "Trends in Saudi National Security," *Middle East Journal* 53, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 242.

prompted King Fahd on 6 August 1990 to accept the offer from the United States to deploy forces into Saudi Arabia to defend it from a possible Iraqi invasion.[49]

Riyadh's fears concerning Saddam's intentions prompted Saudi Arabia to become involved directly in the war against Iraq. This conflict marked the first time since its invasion of Yemen in 1934 that Saudi Arabia had fought against another Arab state. Saudi leaders were relieved when Iraq was defeated; however, they realized the likelihood of rapprochement with Baghdad was remote. Consequently, postwar Saudi security policy focused on ways to contain potential Iraqi threats to the Kingdom. One element of this policy included support for Iraqi opposition groups that advocated the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. Another was support for the U.S. led containment policy against Iraq. U.S. and coalition aircraft were permitted to operate out of Saudi airbases to enforce the southern no-fly zone as part of Operation SOUTHERN WATCH.

In the aftermath of the U.S. led war to oust Saddam Hussein in 2003, the perception in Riyadh is that the security threat to the Kingdom from Iraq today is low. The U.S. eliminated the military threat Iraq posed to its neighbors. There remains the possibility however that by the end of the decade, a successfully rehabilitated Iraq could pose a security threat to the al-Saud, albeit one of a political rather than a direct military nature.

---

[49] Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *The General's War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf* (Boston, New York, London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 52.

III.   CHALLENGES TO SAUDI SECURITY

A.   INTRODCUTION

In the coming years, Saudi Arabia will need to address a host of external and internal issues that impact the security of the Kingdom. Externally, despite a fundamental change in the Persian Gulf security environment from the removal of the Iraqi military threat, there remain concerns. Iran is primary of these concerns. The rapprochement between Riyadh and Tehran while welcomed on both sides is for all intents and purposes, superficial. Additionally the resurgence by conservative forces in Iran evidenced by the results of the February 2004 parliamentary elections may increase tensions between the Islamic Republic and the U.S. leaving the Saudis caught in the middle.

Internal threats to stability pose a more serious security challenge. Violent attacks from Islamic extremists have increased in the wake of Saudi support for the U.S. led GWOT. This rise in extremism has been fueled by the convergence of demographic, economic and political realities within the Kingdom which, if not addressed, could result in massive instability by the end of the decade. There is the also the question of succession within the ruling family. The advanced ages of the sons of Abd al-Aziz dictate that a formula for transferring rule to the next generation must be found to prevent potential al-Saud infighting.

Additionally, the U.S.-Saudi security partnership is at a critical juncture in its 50-plus year history. Currently, pressure is being applied from both sides to radically redefine or terminate the relationship. For the al-Saud, the United States has been the ultimate guarantor of external security since the partnership's inception.[50] A loss of confidence in America's guarantee would severely impact al-Saud security perceptions. Should the partnership falter, Riyadh would be hard pressed to find another option to ensure its external security. The rest of this chapter outlines the major security challenges

---

[50] President Franklin Roosevelt, in Executive Order 8926, dated 18 February 1943, stated that the defense of Saudi Arabia is vital to the defense of the United States.

the Kingdom faces. Emphasis is placed on internal security matters, as it is the position of this paper that these challenges pose the most severe threat to the al-Saud over the next decade.

B.   REGIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES: THE THREAT FROM IRAN

Even prior to the 1979 Islamic Revolution, relations between the Kingdom and Iran were problematic; a byproduct of the history between the Wahhabis and Shi'a that left little room for compromise.[51] Riyadh and Tehran saw the other more often as a rival than as a friend.[52] Yet, the fall of the Shah and rise of an Islamic Republic in Iran marked a drastic downturn in relations. Tehran now viewed Riyadh as an enemy and took a variety of hostile actions against the Saudis. Iran's leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, frequently issued verbal denouncements of the al-Saud, challenging their Islamic legitimacy. Iranian pilgrims to Mecca increasingly created problems for Saudi security forces, culminating in violent clashes between the two during the 1987 *Hajj* that left 400 Iranians dead. The downward spiral in relations continued, with Riyadh finally severing diplomatic relations in 1988.

The death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989 coupled with the election of Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani to the presidency and the horrific casualties suffered from the eight year war with Iraq saw Iran move away from its foreign policy of exporting the Islamic Revolution to a more pragmatic approach, particularly with its Arab neighbors in the Persian Gulf. Riyadh acknowledged this shift by restoring relations with Iran in 1991 after the U.S. led war against Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait. From Riyadh's perspective, engagement with Tehran was necessary as Saddam's defeat left Iran as the front runner in the race for regional leadership. With the election of Muhammad Khatami to the presidency in 1997 and the success of Heir Apparent Abdullah efforts to secure his power base after King Fahd's 1995 stroke, rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran

---

[51] For two examples of events that fostered animosity between the two sects, see p. 8
[52] See Saeed M. Badeeb *Saudi-Iranian Relations: 1932-1982* (London: Centre for Arab and Iranian Studies, 1993) for an in-depth review of relations between Riyadh and Pahlavi Iran.

moved at a much quicker pace.[53] In 1998 Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal, while in Tehran, signed an agreement with his Iranian counterpart Kamal Kharrazi on cooperation in a variety of areas including economic, commercial, technical, scientific, sports and cultural fields. It also covered cooperation in providing consular services, expansion of communications services, air and sea transport and environmental issues.[54]

While this agreement and a subsequent one, signed in 2001 and labeled by both sides as a "Security Pact",[55] can be seen as positives in that tensions between the two countries have been ameliorated, from a Saudi security perspective, there remain several issues of concern. The size and composition of Iran's military forces necessitates that strategy planners in Riyadh ensure the Kingdom maintains a military capability robust enough to deter any potential Iranian attack. Recent estimates of the size of Iran's land forces range from 470,000 to 513,000 active combatants,[56] giving Iran the largest military force in the region. Size notwithstanding, the capabilities of Iran to mount offensive ground combat operations are such that they pose no realistic threat to the Kingdom in the next decade.

The Iranian Air Force, on the other hand, must be perceived as a potential security threat to Riyadh. Flying a mixture of Western and Former Soviet aircraft[57], Iran has placed emphasis on its Air Force as a means of countering the U.S. military presence in the region. In this endeavor, it has developed a viable strike capability. Using U.S. F-4 Phantoms or Su-24 Fencers, Iran could launch strikes against Saudi desalination facilities

---

[53] 1997 is usually cited for the beginning of the Saudi-Iranian rapprochement; this fails to take into account the warming of relations that had started six years earlier. Another fact often overlooked is that both sides actively sought rapprochement. See Gwenn Okruhlik, "Saudi Arabian-Iranian Relations: External Rapprochement and Internal Consolidation" *Middle East Policy* 10, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 114.

[54] A full text of the agreement can be found at http://www.ain-al-yaqeen.com/issues/19980603/feat6en.htm (March 2004).

[55] The pact did not address actual military cooperation. Saudi Interior Minister Nayef bin Abd al-Aziz indicated the agreement aimed at fighting terrorism and crimes such as drug trafficking. He was specifically quoted as saying the agreement is "a security one and has no military dimension". See "Saudi Arabia and Iran: The Security Agreement is on April 15" *Arabic News.com*, 2 April 2001 at http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/010402/2001040217.html (March 2004).

[56] Anthony H. Cordesman, "Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal Security Dimension Part I. Saudi Strategic Challenges" Draft Document, *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 30 October 2002 http://csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_01.pdf (March 2004).

[57] Ibid. They also fly the Chinese built F-7 which is a copy of the Soviet MiG-21. Iran has around 20 Mirage F-1 combat aircraft in its inventory acquired from Iraq during the Gulf War however; they are not operational at this time.

or oil infrastructure on its eastern coast.[58] Damage or destruction of these facilities would cause severe disruptions in the Kingdom, possibly leading to a major crisis.

Iranian naval capabilities pose another dilemma for Riyadh. Since the 1991 Gulf War, Iran has made major improvements in its abilities to threaten Gulf maritime shipping. In February 2004, testimony by the head of the Defense Intelligence Agency before the United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence concluded the following regarding Iranian naval capabilities:

> Iran's Navy, the region's most capable, can temporarily disrupt maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz using a layered force of KILO Class diesel submarines, ship- and shore-based anti-ship cruise missiles and naval mines.[59]

Certainly, the Iranian capability to disrupt transit of Saudi oil through the Persian Gulf is still perceived as a potential threat to the Kingdom's security.

There is also the question of Iran's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs. Iran has chemical weapons and is also suspected of possessing biological weapons. Iran's nuclear energy program, which is reportedly only for peaceful purposes, has long been suspected of supporting a clandestine effort to acquire nuclear weapons. In addition, they also have a variety of ballistic missiles capable of hitting any part of Saudi Arabia.[60] Given the history of Saudi relations with the Islamic Republic, it would seem prudent that Riyadh keep a watchful eye on developments in Iranian WMD programs.

For Saudi Arabia, the potential threat to security posed by Iran is indeed valid; the Saudis would have less than ten minutes warning of an air attack from Iran. Missile attacks would offer even less warning and present more problems for defense. While Iran cannot bring the bulk of its land power to bear against the Kingdom, it can utilize its naval and air capabilities against tanker and air traffic through the Gulf, and can terrorize the Saudi population with missiles, as well as chemical and possible biological weapons.

---

[58] It was reported in 1997 that Iran successfully test fired two Chinese C-801 anti-ship cruise missiles from F-4 aircraft. "Jane's Security Sentinel Assessment – The Gulf States" 12 August 2003 http://www.janes.com (March 2004).

[59] For a full transcript of Admiral Jacoby's testimony, see http://intelligence.senate.gov/0402hrg/040224/witness.htm (March 2004).
[60] Data on Iranian WMD programs taken from the Monterey Institute for International Studies Center for Nonproliferation Studies website http://www.cns.miis.edu/index.htm (March 2004).

The likelihood of any attack from Iran in the near term however is remote. As the rapprochement between Riyadh and Tehran continues, emphasis will be placed on cooperation rather than confrontation. Additionally, the large U.S. military presence in the region serves as a reminder to Tehran not just of the importance of the region to

American interests, but also of the U.S.-Saudi security partnership. As long as the United States continues to be the guarantor of Saudi external security, such threats to the Kingdom will be held in check.

C. INTERNAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

On 13 November 1995, a 220-pound car bomb exploded in a parking lot adjacent to an office building housing the Office of the Program Manager, Saudi Arabian National Guard (OPM SANG) in Riyadh, killing five Americans, two Indians and injuring 42 others.[61] Initially, the Saudi government blamed foreign operatives for the bombing however, the subsequent investigation revealed that the attackers were all Saudis from prominent Najdi tribes who were disaffected with the regime.[62]As stated in the beginning of this paper, the most salient threats to the Kingdom's security during the coming decade are internal. Demographic, economic and political factors that impact security surfaced within Saudi Arabia at the end of the 1991 Gulf War. The true threat to the Kingdom however, lies within the synergy created by the convergence of these issues. These factors are identified and expanded upon in no particular order of importance, as it is asserted these issues are inextricably interconnected and must be addressed in a systematic way by the Saudi government.

1. Demographic and Economic Realities

In 1970, the population of Saudi Arabia stood at approximately 5.7 million.[63] Riding a wave of modernization powered by massive oil revenues, the al-Saud suddenly found themselves in the midst of a radical transformation that included the Kingdom's

---

[61] U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, "Patterns of Global Terrorism – 1995 Middle East Overview" (Washington, D.C., April 1996) http://www.terrorismcentral.com/Library/Government/US/StateDepartment/CounterterrorismOffice/patterns/1995/MiddleEastOverview.html (March 2004).

[62] Mamoon Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent* (New York:, Palgrave, 1999), 2.

[63] All population figures unless otherwise indicated were obtained from: Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, *World Population Prospects: The 2002 Revision* and *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2001 Revision*, http://esa.un.org/unpp (March 2004).

highest population growth, the fastest urbanization and an enormous influx of immigrants. Using its newfound wealth, the Kingdom created modern infrastructure, trebled literacy rates, and raised average life expectancy by almost twenty years. Lavish benefits were heaped upon Saudi citizens, to include free education and health care, subsidized housing and utilities, even a stipend from the government for the marriage dowry.

The dramatic improvements in the Saudi standard of living coupled with a high population growth rate and higher life expectancy had, by the turn of the century, resulted in more than a tripling of the population to 22.1 million. The average population growth rate from 1970-2000 was 4.5 percent. For comparison, the average growth rate for the world during the same timeframe was 1.66 percent. Life expectancy in Saudi Arabia shot up from 53.9 to 70.9 years over the same period. Projections for the year 2020 estimate a Saudi population of just over 36 million with an average life expectancy of 75.3 years.[64] The population estimate assumes that the growth rate will decline from 2000-2020, averaging 2.6 percent for the 20 year period. Even if the population growth rate drops as predicted, the momentum from earlier years has created a youth bulge in the Saudi populace. In 2000, the percentage of the Saudi population aged 24 years or less was almost 58 percent. This will have a major impact on the Saudi labor force which is expected to grow from 3.3 million today to over 8 million by 2020. [65]

Because demographics and economics interact to determine figures such as per capita income, the impact one has on the other can be observed.[66] In the case of Saudi Arabia, the phenomenal growth of the population combined with a stagnant economy has led to a dramatic fall in Saudi per capita income from its high in 1981 of US $18,000 to

---

[64] Population estimate based on the medium variant assumption. Using the other three variants (low, high, and constant-fertility) produced estimates ranging from 34.5 to 41.9 million.
[65] "People Pressure" *Economist.com*, 21 March 2002
http://www.economist.com/printedition/PrinterFriendly.cfm?Story_ID=1033986 (September 2003)
[66] It must be noted that the use of multiple standards and conversions in the calculation of Saudi per capita GDP makes an exact determination problematic. For example, the 2000 Economic Performance Report released by the Saudi American Bank showed a per capita GDP for the year of US $7,362. The 2002 report showed a value of US $9,038 for the same year. All per capita figures from 1996-2001 were revised in the 2002 and later reports because the Saudi Ministry of Planning Central Department of Statistics adjusted the size of the Saudi economy upward by US $6.7 billion.

US $6,837 in 2001.[67] The oil revenue "pie" was not necessarily shrinking; it had to be cut into smaller and smaller pieces. Because the economy could not keep pace with the population, the government was forced in 1982 to run a budget deficit. It was not until 2001 that the Kingdom again reported a budget surplus.[68]

Population pressures have also highlighted a disturbing factor in the Saudi Arabian economy; the lack of native Saudi participation in the country's labor force. The Kingdom suffers from a lopsided labor structure. This goes back to the 1970s, when ballooning oil incomes allowed the government to import millions of foreign workers and to dispense cozy, public sector jobs to Saudi citizens. The result today is a two-tier workforce, with outsiders working mostly in the private sector and Saudis monopolizing the state bureaucracy. Expatriate workers in the private sector are estimated to outnumber Saudi natives at a ratio of 4:1.

Many of Saudi Arabia's problems today could be ameliorated by incorporating its native population into the workforce. During the late 1990s, the Saudi government did launch efforts to replace foreign workers with Saudi nationals (Saudization) by requiring all foreign and domestic businesses to ensure their employees were 25-30 percent Saudi nationals. The Saudi government plans on decreasing the foreign work force by 2-3 percent each year in the Seventh Development Plan (2000-2004).[69] The plan's objective is to achieve a US $4.6 billion increase in domestic Saudi wages by transferring money paid to foreigners, of which almost none is spent inside Saudi Arabia, to Saudi nationals who would spend almost all earnings within Saudi borders.[70]

Unemployment amongst the native population will be a growing problem in the country for the next decade. An estimated 200,000 graduates are being churned out of the state-supported educational system annually with no prospect of gainful employment in a still evolving private sector that remains dependent on expatriate workers. In 2003,

---

[67] Brad Bourland, "The Saudi Economy: 2000 Performance, 2001 Forecast" *Saudi American Bank* http://www.samba.com.sa/investment/economywatch/pdf/SaudiEconomy2000.pdf (March 2004)
[68] Saudi planners based the 2000 budget on oil price of $US 18 per/barrel. The average price for the year was $US 27 per/barrel.

[69] A copy of the Seventh Development Plan can be found on the Ministry of Economy and Planning website http://www.planning.gov.sa/PLANNING/Drive_A/7CONTe.htm
[70] Kevin Rollin Taecker, "Myths And Realities About Unemployment in Saudi Arabia" *The Saudi-American Forum* http://www.saudi-american-forum.org/Newsletters/SAF_Essay_11.htm (March 2004)

an estimated 30 percent of males and females in the age group of 20-24 were unemployed.[71] Future efforts to lower native Saudi unemployment will hinge upon the expense required to educate upcoming generations, the provision of jobs from the private sector, and the added volatile pressures of maintaining stable revenues from oil and an explosive population growth.[72] Gainfully employing these young Saudis in the future is critical for the government as unemployed, disaffected youth have proven to be ripe recruiting grounds for Islamic extremists operating in the Kingdom.

2. Demographics and Economics Converging: Water Scarcity

The issue of water scarcity provides an excellent example of a security threat created by the Kingdom's economic and demographic realities. Saudi Arabia has always been considered an arid place, with an average annual rainfall of under 100 millimeters. And until recently, water conservation was given little if any thought. While half of the water the Kingdom uses is supplied by desalination, the other half comes from non-renewable sources. These resources are being depleted at an alarming rate. A 1984 survey estimated Saudi Arabia's non-renewable water resources at 132 trillion gallons.[73] As of 2003, about half of that has been used up. Less than a third of Saudi homes are hooked up to sewage treatment facilities. Wastewater is pumped out to shallow lagoons where it is left to evaporate off or leach into the ground, contaminating what little renewable groundwater is available.

This misuse of such a valuable resource pales in comparison with their use of water for agricultural purposes. Saudi Arabia in the early 1980s encouraged farmers to grow wheat by providing large subsidies. This provided funding for expensive drilling into deep pockets of non-renewable water sources for irrigation. The extraction costs for this water was so great that the wheat ended up costing fives times what it would to import. Farmers often ended up producing more wheat than domestic demand could absorb. The surplus was then either given away or left to rot.

---

[71] Ibid.

[72] Robert E. Looney, "Factors Affecting Employment in the Arabian Gulf Region, 1975-85," *International Journal of Social Economics*, 19, no. 2 (1992): 43-47.

[73] Craig Smith, "Saudis Worry as They Waste Their Scarce Water" *New York Times*, 26 January 2003, sec. 1, p. 4.

With 30 desalination plants producing 890 million cubic meters (MCM) of water a year, Saudi Arabia accounts for 30 percent of total global output of desalinated water.[74] This provides about 70 percent of drinking water in the Kingdom.[75] This production augments the approximately 500,000 MCM of proven reserves of water from non-renewable sources. Additionally, a limited amount of water from renewable resources is available as well. Most of the Kingdom's natural water resources are utilized for agriculture.

Dealing with growing demand for limited water resources will continue to challenge the Saudi Government over the next five years. Much of the current water infrastructure was built in the 1970's and is fast approaching the end of its service life. This coupled with a rapidly increasing Saudi population will place demands that cannot be met by existing capacity. Massive investment in water infrastructure will be required to keep pace with current levels of consumption for the next five years. A paper entitled *Future Strategy for Water Resources Management in Saudi Arabia*, presented in Riyadh in October 2002 at the Symposium on the Future Vision of the Saudi Economy in the year 2020 gave the following estimates of investments required to expand the water and wastewater treatment facilities:

**Table 1.   Cost Estimates for Construction of Water Infrastructure
(Constant 2002 US Dollars)[76]**

	2002	For the period 2021-2040
Construction of desalination plants	2.1	16
Construction of treatment plants and desalination of well water	0.8	6.6
Laying conveyance pipelines	-	3.4
Water distribution networks	2.4	17.8
Wastewater networks	3.4	19.4
Wastewater treatment plants	2.9	16.6
Developing strategic reservoirs and emergency distribution system	5.3	1.06
Total:	**16.9**	**80.86**

---

[74] "Water Industries Market in Saudi Arabia" UK Trade and Investment Website http://www.tradepartners.gov.uk/water/saudi_arabia/profile/overview.shtml (November 2003).
[75] Saudi Arabian Information Resource http://www.saudinf.com/main/a54.htm (August 2003).
[76] "Water Industries Market in Saudi Arabia" UK Trade and Investment Website http://www.tradepartners.gov.uk/water/saudi_arabia/profile/overview.shtml (November 2003).

The current economic situation in Saudi Arabia makes it highly unlikely these levels of spending are attainable, the net effect being the already overstressed water resources and infrastructure of the Kingdom will be pushed even further. While this should be manageable over the next five years, based on 1995 consumption levels, it is estimated the Kingdom's non-renewable water resources will be depleted in approximately 22 years.[77] As these resources provide approximately 80 percent of the water used in agriculture, it is highly likely the Kingdom's agricultural industry will need to be reformed to reflect this reality.

Increased reliance on desalinated water will occur over the next decade. The Saline Water Conservation Corporation (SWCC) is the agency responsible for providing this water. According to the Seventh Development Plan (2000-2004)[78], 12 desalination plants will be built to provide 50 percent of the current personal daily consumption rate of 300 liters.[79] SWCC has plans to build 22 additional desalination plants by 2020, just to meet projected demand based on current per capita consumption rates.

In the near term, Saudi Arabia should be able to maintain an adequate (if somewhat reduced in terms of personal per capita level) supply of water to meet the Kingdom's needs. This assumes current levels of investment (not the recommended amounts indicated above) continue and that the consumption rate of the Kingdom's non-renewable water resources remains relatively constant. Over the long term (10-15 years), a population that is expected to increase 50 percent by 2020 will place demands on the Kingdom's water resources that it will not be able to meet without massive investment in desalination plants and other water infrastructure projects. Similarly, as non-renewable water sources begin to dry up, a reexamination of the viability of the Saudi agricultural sector will be necessary. Consumption data is provided below.

---

[77] Shobha Shetty, "Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Future Vision of the Saudi Economy Agriculture and Water Resources Management: Issues and Options" (paper presented at the Symposium on the Future Vision of the Saudi Economy in the Year 2020, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, October 2002) http://www.futurevision2020.co.uk/notes.html (August 2003).
[78] Seventh Development Plan http://www.planning.gov.sa/PLANNING/Drive_A/7CONTe.htm
[79] Bourland, "The Saudi Economy: 2000 Performance, 2001 Forecast." http://www.samba.com.sa/investment/economywatch/pdf/SaudiEconomy2000.pdf (March 2004).

Table 2. Consumption and Sources of Water Resources in Saudi Arabia (Million cubic meters –MCM- per year)[80]

Item/Year	1985	1990	1995	1999	2004
Consumption:					
Municipal/Industrial	1200	1650	1800	2200	2630
Agriculture	7400	14580	16400	18540	19850
Total	**8600**	**16230**	**18200**	**20740**	**22480**
Sources:					
Renewable water	1850	2100	2500	8000	8000
Non-renewable ground water	6320	13480	14836	11769	13120
Desalinated water	330	540	714	791	1050
Reclaimed wastewater	100	110	150	180	310
Total	**8600**	**16230**	**18200**	**20740**	**22480**

Lack of abundant natural water resources and increased reliance on desalinated water to meet the demands of a rapidly growing population has emerged as both a current and future security challenge to the Kingdom. Unexpected revenues from higher than anticipated oil prices over the last three years could be applied toward developing the requisite infrastructure, though the tendency within the Saudi Government is to put off addressing difficult issues until absolutely necessary. Unfortunately for the al-Saud, the time to act has arrived. Failure to make the necessary investments to create new capacity could have dramatic consequences for the Kingdom. In addition, desalination plants are considered "soft targets" and could be very vulnerable to military or terrorist attack. Any attack against any number of plants could be economically crippling to the regime and thus poses a grave security theat. Significant water shortages could be used as a catalyst to generate unrest within the Kingdom. It would be prudent from a security standpoint to

---

[80] Shobha Shetty, "Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Future Vision of the Saudi Economy Agriculture and Water Resources Management: Issues and Options" (paper presented at the Symposium on the Future Vision of the Saudi Economy in the Year 2020, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, October 2002) http://www.futurevision2020.co.uk/notes.html (August 2003).

expect the Saudis to give increased importance to providing adequate defensive measures for these critical resources henceforth.

3.   The Threat from Internal Political Violence

In May 2003, most of the 5,500 U.S. troops and all the operational combat aircraft that had been stationed in Saudi Arabia for more than a decade were moved to neighboring Qatar. The decision to end the U.S. presence in Saudi Arabia was mutually agreed to by Washington and Riyadh. U.S. forces had remained in the Kingdom to patrol the Iraqi no-fly zones imposed after the 1991 Gulf War. With the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime the rational for the no-fly zones no longer existed. For the al-Saud, the departure of the U.S. troops carried the added benefit of addressing the demand of Osama bin Laden that called for the removal of the "infidels" from the land of the holy places.[81] As such, it was expected that the move would reduce the threat of future terrorist attacks, both against the U.S. and in Saudi Arabia.

For the al-Saud, the belief they ruled the Kingdom under a mantel of Islamic legitimacy mitigated any perception of vulnerability to religious radicalism. The error of judgment in this optimism was illustrated in quite violent fashion on 12 May 2003 when a series of terrorist attacks in Riyadh rocked the Kingdom. The attacks occurred one day before U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell was scheduled to arrive in Riyadh, and all of the targets were luxury compounds that housed foreign nationals.[82] The terrorists broke into three compounds, firing automatic weapons and setting off several car bombs. By the time the carnage was over, 35 people, including nine attackers, were dead and over two hundred more injured. Eight of the dead were Americans, but most of those killed were Saudis, a fact that led many to describe the attacks as "Saudi Arabia's September 11th."[83]

Reinforcing the parallel was the fact that at least three of the bombers who could be identified were among 19 individuals named by the government as suspected members of al-Qaida. Apparently, all three had only narrowly avoided apprehension just a few days before the bombings, when a raid on an alleged al-Qaida hideout east of Riyadh by

---

[81] Fandy, 189.
[82] "Saudi Arabia: What Happened?" *BBC News*, 13 May 2003
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3024375.stm (March 2004).
[83] Roger Hardy, "Saudi's War on the 'Enemy Within'" *BBC News*, 9 November 2003
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3255357.stm (March 2004).

Saudi security forces failed to apprehend any of the suspects, who had escaped in an ensuing gun battle.[84]

The US initially expressed outrage over the inaction of Saudi authorities, claiming that it had warned of an imminent attack.[85] Just hours after the attacks, Crown Prince Abdullah delivered a forceful speech in which he pledged that the government would target not only terrorists, but also those who incite them and provide a rationale for their actions when he stated:

> There can be no acceptance of, or justification for terrorism. Nor is there a place for any ideology that promotes it, or beliefs that condone it. We warn against anyone who tries to justify these crimes in the name of religion. And we say that anyone who tries to do so will be considered a partner of terrorists, and will share their fate.[86]

On 28 May, Interior Minister Nayef bin Abd al-Aziz announced the arrest of 11 more people in connection with the 12 May attacks, bringing the total arrested to 21. Authorities contended that the detainees, including three clerics, were al-Qaida sympathizers.[87] In an apparently related move, the government carried out a sweeping purge of the clerical establishment, revoking the licenses of an estimated 1,700 religious leaders in late May.[88] According to official reports, some 350 of those involved have been relieved of their duties, and the rest have been ordered to undergo reeducation.

The government's denials notwithstanding, the crackdown was most likely a response to criticism that the monarchy has ignored religious leaders who preach hatred of the West and other religions in the country's mosques. From these recent activities by the Saudi government, it is not unreasonable to assume a change in the mindset of the ruling al-Saud; that perhaps, there might be a link between Islamic extremism and the strict interpretation of Islam that has served as the bedrock for al-Saud ruling legitimacy since they first struck an alliance with Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in 1744.

---

84 Saudi Arabia Information Resource, "Saudi security authorities abort attempted terrorist attack" 7 May 2003 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y5703.htm (March 2004).

85 The U.S. Embassy in Riyadh on 3 May 2003 released a Warden Message regarding travel to Saudi Arabia that stated "terrorist groups may be in the final stages of planning attacks against U.S. interests in Saudi Arabia." The full text of the message may be found at http://riyadh.usembassy.gov/wwwusc21.doc (March 2004).

86 Saudi Arabia Information Resource, "Crown Prince Abdullah addresses the nation on Riyadh explosions" 13 May 2003 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y5720.htm (March 2004).

87 Saudi Arabia Information Resource, "Prince Nayef announces arrest of 11 terrorist suspects" 28 May 2003 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y5760.htm (March 2004).

88 Hardy, "Saudi's War on the 'Enemy Within'"

Any doubts about whether the al-Saud might be permitted to continue their crackdown against al-Qaeda and their terrorist operations within the Kingdom without invoking a response were apparently put to rest on 8 November 2003, when less than six months from the 12 May bombings, another massive suicide bomb attack rocked Riyadh. According to press reports, a group of men in a civilian vehicle initiated an attack on guards at the al-Muhaya residential compound, a target that is within shouting distance of palaces that are home to members of the royal family.[89] Using hand grenades and light weapons, they created a diversion that enabled a second car, painted to resemble a Saudi security vehicle and loaded with hundreds of pounds of explosives, to gain access to the compound. The subsequent explosion killed 17 people and wounded 120.[90]

Like the 12 May bombing this attack also targeted an expatriate residential compound. This time however, all of the foreigners killed in the bombing were Arabs, furthermore, most were Muslims. The fact that the attack killed Muslims during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan generated great horror among Saudi citizens and the Muslim world, providing Riyadh with the political cover necessary to respond aggressively against the terrorist threat.[91]

The tone of the government's response was set in the aftermath of the November attack when King Fahd at a weekly cabinet meeting made the following statement against the extremists behind the attacks:

> We will deal with all those who try to destabilize the country and undermine the peace and security of citizens with an iron hand, and we will track down the criminals behind these attacks and those who support them.[92]

A London-based Saudi magazine reported receiving an e-mail message from a representative of al-Qaeda claiming responsibility for the attack.[93] In addition, DNA

---

[89] "Saudi Police Arrest Bomb Suspects" *BBC News* 11 November 2003 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3261809.stm (March 2004).
[90] Ibid.
[91] "Riyadh Bombing Appalls Arab Press" *BBC News* 10 November 2003 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3256823.stm (March 2004).
[92] Saudi Arabia Information Resource, "Saudi Cabinet weekly meeting" 11 November 2003 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y6331.htm (March 2004).
[93] "Saudi Police Arrest Bomb Suspects"

identification of two of the al-Muhaya bombers revealed that the perpetrators were Saudi nationals who were known to have fought in Afghanistan with al-Qaeda.[94]

Since the November attack, Saudi security forces have ratcheted up their operations against extremists operating within the Kingdom, confiscating huge caches of weapons, and capturing or killing hundreds of suspected terrorists.[95] According to police, they thwarted another planned attack in November after discovering a vehicle carrying 1.2 tons of explosives, four times the amount used in the al-Muhaya bombing. Authorities contend that the plan had been to carry out a bombing in late November, on *Eid-al-Fitr*, a day of celebration that marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan.[96]

In December 2003, the government released a list of its 26 most-wanted terrorists. In an attempt to gain support from Saudi citizens in tracking down the suspected terrorists, rewards ranging from US\$ 266,000 to \$US 1.8 million for information leading to the arrest of anyone on the list or preventing future attacks.[97] It would appear from the decisive and pragmatic actions taken by the al-Saud against extremists in the Kingdom, that the perceived threat to their rule is serious enough to warrant immediate and focused attention. The killing of Muslims by al-Qaeda during Ramadan has, for the moment, diminished the popularity of the extremists' cause with the Saudi public. It is imperative the al-Saud take advantage of this window of opportunity.

4.   After Abdallah: The Question of Succession

King Fahd bin Abd al-Aziz has ruled Saudi Arabia since 1982 when he assumed the throne after the death of King Khalid, continuing the tradition that the King shall be selected from the sons of Abd al-Aziz.[98] That this process was a "tradition" meant that there were no formal rules to follow when the time to select a new King came. In 1992, King Fahd decided to codify the tradition by incorporating in into a Royal Decree called

---

[94] "US Warns of More Possible Attacks in Saudi" *Middle East Online* 12 December 2003 http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=8001 (March 2004).

[95] Statements providing information on continuing operations against extremists in the Kingdom are regularly posted on the Saudi Arabia Information Resource website http://www.saudinf.com/

[96] "UK's Fresh Saudi Terror Warning" *BBC News* http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3249434.stm (March 2004).

[97] Saudi Arabian Information Resource, "Interior Ministry announces names of wanted suspects" 6 December 2003 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y6450.htm (March 2004).

[98] It has been reported in several places that Abd al-Aziz wished the Kingship be passed down through his sons in order of eldest to youngest. While never confirmed, in practice, it has been followed. In the instance of Khalid's ascension to the throne, he was crowned after his older brother Muhammad had renounced his claim to the throne and supported Khalid's candidacy.

the Basic Law of Government, enacted on 1 March 1992.[99] In section two which is titled "The Law of the Government" Article Five, describes the system of government and the rules for succession:

> (a) The system of government in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is monarchy.
> (b) Rule passes to the sons of the founding King, King Abdul Aziz bin Abd al-Rahman al-Faisal Al Saud, and to their children's children. The most upright of them is to receive allegiance in accordance with [the principles] of the Holy *Koran* and the tradition of the Venerable Prophet.
> (c) The king chooses the heir apparent and relieves him [of his duties] by royal order.
> (d) The heir apparent is to devote his time [to his duties] as an heir apparent and to whatever missions the king entrusts him with.
> (e) The heir apparent takes over the powers of the king on the latter's death until the act of allegiance has been carried out.[100]

Following the law, King Saud officially named his half-brother Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz as the Crown Prince and Sultan bin Abd al-Aziz as second in line to the throne.[101] Crown Prince Abdallah has been managing the affairs of the Kingdom since late 1995, after King Fahd suffered a severe stroke and has been widely acknowledged by outsiders as *de facto* leader of Saudi Arabia. When King Fahd dies, it is expected Abdallah will be named King. Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and Aviation Sultan bin Abd al-Aziz will be named Crown Prince and Heir Apparent.

There are several major challenges facing the succession process after Abdallah becomes King. One will be the consolidation of power under his rule. Because Abdallah and Sultan have in the past, disagreed more than agreed, when King Fahd named Sultan as second in line, he set up a situation for potential future strife within the al-Saud. Abdallah unlike Fahd, who was one of the "Sudayri Seven", has no brothers to form alliances with; Sultan, baring any premature deaths, will have five full brothers to draw support from. This has forced Abdallah to reach out to other members of the royal family for support. In his attempt to do so he has cultivated alliances with several of the sons of

---

99 Simon Henderson, *After King Fahd: Succession in Saudi Arabia* (Washington DC:, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1994), 21.
100 Ibid., 55.
101 King Khalid named Abdallah second deputy prime minister which in reality indicated him as the second in line to the throne after then Crown Prince and Heir Apparent Fahd.

the late King Faisal,[102] the most prominent of which is the Saudi Foreign Minister Saud bin Faisal.

Another challenge is literally one of time. In 2004, Crown Prince Abdallah will be 81 years old. His half-brother and Heir Apparent in waiting Sultan will be 80.[103] The sons of Abd al-Aziz are all reaching advanced ages, creating a situation in which there may be a series of kings in quick succession. The naming of a second deputy prime minister thus becomes problematic; when should the shift to the selection of the grandsons of Abd al-Aziz take place? Fellow sons of Abd al-Aziz and Sudayri brothers Nayef and Salman both likely harbor aspirations of becoming king, and would view unfavorably attempts to jump them in favor of a ruler from the next generation. Prince Nayef has led the powerful Interior Ministry since 1975 while Prince Salman has ruled as governor of Riyadh Province since 1962. Salman also heads the informal "Family Council" providing him with another potential powerbase.

Regarding the passing of rule to the next generation, the actions taken by King Fahd to secure prominent positions for several of his sons has raised concerns among his fellow Sudayri brethren. In 1985, Muhammad bin Fahd was made governor of the important Eastern Province. He has ruled over the troublesome province quite ably, demonstrating his leadership capabilities to other members of the royal family. Another son, Saud bin Fahd has served in the External Intelligence Directorate since 1985. Supposed favorite son Abdul Aziz bin Fahd holds the title Minister of State. While the youngest of Fahd's sons, he is often seen in public with the King.[104] Not to be outdone, other senior members of the al-Saud have worked to place sons in key positions. Defense Minister Sultan has two very prominent sons. Bandar bin Sultan has been the Saudi Ambassador to the United States, arguably the most important foreign policy position from a security standpoint, since 1983. Khalid bin Sultan was the commander of the coalition forces during the 1991 Gulf War. He has maintained a very high profile since then and is now currently serving under his father as Assistant Minister of Defense and

---

[102] In some documents, they are collectively referred to as the al-Faisal.
[103] While Abdallah is considered to be in good health, the same cannot be said for Sultan. Other prominent sons of Abd al-Aziz who could legitimately become king and their current ages are Nayef (71) and Salman (68)
[104] Kechichian, *Succession in Saudi Arabia*, 76.

Aviation and Inspector General for Military Affairs.[105] Mit'ab bin Abdallah, son of the Crown Prince, has been the deputy commander of the National Guard since 1984. Two other sons hold key posts in the National Guard as well.

The jockeying for position amongst the sons and grandsons of Abd al-Aziz will impact the issue of succession over the next decade. This is to be expected, as such maneuvering has been prevalent in al-Saud family dynamics for as long as they have ruled. Should the competition between Abdallah and Sultan lead to a crisis situation within the ruling family, it is possible that a consensus candidate for king like Prince Salman might be put forward to maintain stability within the family. If in fact, we see a generational jump in the next decade to the grandsons of Abd al-Aziz, the younger rulers could have a tremendous impact on the pace of reform (both political and economic) as well as the relationship between Washington and Riyadh. Infighting within the al-Saud is definitely a security concern for the senior members of the family.

D.   MANAGING THE U.S.-SAUDI SECURITY PARTNERSHIP

The U.S. government's pursuit of its policy of regime change in Iraq in 2003 presented the al-Saud with a challenge requiring the most delicate of balancing acts; maintaining control over a rise of public resentment towards the United States against the increasing demands of the country that has guaranteed their external security through a partnership that has lasted for over fifty years, and inwhose good graces they are desperate to remain. It is no secret to the al-Saud that the extremism espoused by Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda organization resonates among a segment of the Saudi population. They are also keenly aware that the overthrow of the Saudi regime is among the top items on bin Laden's agenda. To mitigate against this threat, the government had allowed extremist groups to receive financial supporters and operate essentially unchecked within Saudi Arabia's borders, with the understanding that the government would continue to turn a blind eye as long as the targets of the militants' remained outside those borders.[106]

---

[105] Saudi Arabian Information Resource, "Prince Khalid bin Sultan stresses preparedness of Saudi forces" 15 March 2003 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y5512.htm (March 2004).
[106] Faye Bowers, "How an Al-Qaeda Hotbed Turned Inhospitable" *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 January 2004 http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0108/p01s04-wome.html (March 2004).

However, this strategy could no longer be applied in the wake of the September 11th attacks and the subsequent U.S. led GWOT against bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network. Suddenly, the al-Saud found themselves under heavy pressure from Washington to crackdown on Saudi nationals with ties to terrorist organizations. By mid-2002, it was clear that Washington was generally unimpressed with Riyadh's efforts. Tensions rose even higher as more hawkish members in the Bush administration raised the specter of war with Iraq with greater intensity throughout the summer of 2002. In an October 2002 interview with a reporter from ABC News, Crown Prince Abdullah hesitated to declare Saudi Arabia's full cooperation for a U.S. initiated military campaign against Iraq.[107] In response, some of the most hawkish advisers to the Bush administration began to ponder-in somewhat open fashion-the potential benefits of a regime change in Riyadh.[108]

From Riyadh's perspective at the time, it seems understandable there would be reservations amongst the al-Saud to providing unlimited support for the American position to effect regime change in Iraq. The belief that the American led effort to bring democracy to Iraq, should it run into difficulties, could bring further instability to the region in hindsight appears prophetic. On the other hand, Riyadh understood an important motivation behind American efforts to convert Iraq into a democratic and pro U.S. country was part of an overall strategy espoused by the neoconservative position to free Washington from its dependence on an Islamic fundamentalist, repressive, and unreliable monarchy in Saudi Arabia. A position, it should be added, that found some support among senior members of the Bush Administration. Success in this endeavor would reduce the strategic importance of the Kingdom to the U.S. and perhaps, eliminate the need for the strong security partnership between Washington and Riyadh that had factored into Saudi security strategy for decades.

These conflicting pressures were evident in the buildup to the Iraq war, as the Saudi government wavered between official declarations of willingness to cooperate in an American-led military campaign (but only if supported by the UN) and categorical

---

[107] In this interview, Abdallah indicated he would allow the U.S. to conduct combat operations from Saudi Arabia into Iraq if there was a UN resolution. Excerpts from the 9 October 2002 interview may be found at: http://www.mediaresearch.org/cyberalerts/2002/cyb20021010.asp (March 2004).

[108] One such individual was Richard Perle, a member of the Defense Policy Board and close advisor to U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. Additionally he recently suggested Saudi Arabia should be added to the "Axis of Evil" during an interview with CNN on 11 January 2004. http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=8460 (March 2004).

rejection of any use of Saudi territory for war-related purposes under any circumstances. As war drew closer, Abdullah stepped up his diplomatic efforts, urging the U.S. to seek a peaceful resolution of the crisis while at the same time proposing that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein spare his people the horrors of war by choosing voluntary exile.[109]

At the time the war started on 20 March, the Saudi government still maintained a position of not choosing sides-in public, anyway. In a press conference on 23 March, Foreign Minister Saud bin Faisal urged the Americans to "Stop the war, let's sit down, let's have a breather after what we have seen of the destruction." Saud also again called upon Saddam Hussein to leave the country, pointedly declaring, "He should start to think about what sacrifices he can make to defend his country."[110]

In retrospect, it is apparent the public statements by Saudi officials were designed entirely for domestic consumption, intended to ameliorate a potentially volatile population by showing the government shared its opposition to the war and had doubts regarding U.S. plans for the region. In spite of the widespread circulation Saudi public criticisms of the Iraq war received in the American press, when it came right down to it, Washington was concerned about actions instead of words, and the reality was that despite official public opposition to the war, the al-Saud offered a great deal of support to the U.S. operation to remove Saddam Hussein.

While Saudi Arabia denied the Americans permission to use its bases to attack Iraq, they did allow the United States to use Prince Sultan as a command and control center for U.S. aircraft. U.S. aerial refueling tankers, reconnaissance planes and other non combat aircraft were allowed to land and take off there. The size of the U.S. force presence at Prince Sultan in the month prior to the start of the war nearly doubled to 10,000 troops. Additionally, prior to the start of the war, U.S. forces were deployed to two other locations in Saudi Arabia, at Arar Air Force Base near the border with Iraq and

---

[109] For examples of official statements that illustrate the flip-flopping of the Saudi position, see Saudi Arabian Information Resource, "Arabs should have final say on Iraq" 25 December 2002 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y5110.htm (March 2004). "Prince Saud meets President Bush", 31 January 2003 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y5314.htm (March 2004). and "Saudi Arabia will not take part in war on Iraq" 19 March 2003 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y5532.htm (March 2004)
[110] "Saudis tell Bush: take a breather, give UN another try" *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 March 2003 http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/03/23/1048354475569.html (March 2004)

in the town of Tabuk. From these positions, they conducted helicopter search-and-rescue missions and launched air-to-air refueling operations.[111]

Since the end of major combat operations in Iraq and in the wake of the May and November 2003 terrorist attacks in Riyadh, public pressure to reevaluate the U.S-Saudi security relationship has fallen. This is in part due to a change in perceptions on both sides. For the al-Saud, the attacks in Riyadh opened their eyes to the real threat posed to their rule. Since the November attack, one can find in the Saudi press weekly reports of gun battles with terrorists, discoveries of hidden arms caches, and foiled attacks. The level of activity would suggest that the al-Qaeda campaign is an all out effort to overthrow the al-Saud and requires a concentrated effort in-kind from the government to defeat the threat. On the U.S. side, the recent actions by Riyadh to crackdown on extremists in the Kingdom are seen as positive steps and that the al-Saud, finally realizing the danger from extremists, are fully engaged in the GWOT.

The 50 plus year security partnership between the United States and Saudi Arabia, like any other long term relationship between two countries, will continue to experience its share of ups and downs. The relationship benefits both the U.S. and the Kingdom, despite differing rationales for entering into it. For Washington, the relationship has always been viewed as one of geo-strategic importance. From Riyadh's point of view, its primary concern was obtaining an alliance with a foreign power that could ensure its external security. The maintenance of this alliance has always depended on the efforts of a few individuals at the highest levels of government on both sides to ensure its continuation. Ongoing efforts by Riyadh and Washington seem to indicate the importance placed on this special relationship by both sides remains valid. Barring unforeseen circumstances, the al-Saud will continue their pragmatic approach towards this partnership and continue it for the foreseeable future. Should the security partnership with the United States weaken, the Kingdom could become more susceptible to coercion through threats from regional neighbors like Iran.

---

[111] "US forces around Iraq" *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 March 2003 http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/03/18/1047749778149.html (March 2004).

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

IV.   CONCLUSIONS

It seems certain that the beginning of the 21st century will be a critical period in the history of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The al-Saud must find a way to implement necessary political and economic reforms required to address serious problems within the Kingdom that affect its security at a pace that will; firstly, allow the reforms to mitigate the problems and secondly, be sold to a Saudi public that everyday sees a growing discrepancy between their falling standard of living and the lifestyle of the ruling al-Saud. It is not an enviable position. That being said, judging from the review in the last chapter of the most recent actions taken by the al-Saud to tackle the problems of the Kingdom, it appears the pragmatism injected by King Abd al-Aziz into Saudi calculations on matters of security remains intact today.

The presence of this pragmatism dictates that it is in the best interests of the al-Saud and Saudi Arabia to maintain the long standing partnership with the United States as it deals with the internal problems facing the Kingdom. Reforms to the economy to include new investments to modernize and expand infrastructure, diversification away from oil and creating new jobs for native Saudis makes major foreign investment in the Kingdom a necessity.[112] In these efforts, the United States is well situated to play a supporting role.

That the al-Saud are now currently engaged in an all out battle against extremist forces inside the Kingdom is another measure of the level of pragmatism present in the security decision making process. While from the perspective of the United States, they should have begun a lot sooner, the fact remains they are taking serious and concrete steps to reduce terrorist attacks by Islamic extremists inside the Kingdom and against U.S. interests.[113] Coordination between the United States and Saudi Arabia in the fight against Islamic extremists inside the Kingdom will aid the overall GWOT.

---

[112] For some possible strategies, see Robert Looney, "Development Strategies for Saudi Arabia: Escaping the Rentier State Syndrome" *Strategic Insights* 3, no. 3, (March 2004)

[113] Most recently, on 28 February 2004, the Saudi government established a new organization to oversee all the charity work supported by the Kingdom. See "New Saudi Body to Oversee Charity" *BBC News*, 28 February 2004 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3496734.stm (March 2004)

The dependency of the Saudi Arabian military on U.S. equipment provides another opportunity for the al-Saud to exercise pragmatism. Having spent over US $65 billion on various arms deals with U.S. firms over the last twenty years, the Saudis are in a position where they must rely on U.S. training and technical expertise to maintain a substantial amount of the Kingdom's most advanced weapons systems. The United States Military Training Mission (USMTM) to the Kingdom has been providing such service since the early 1950's.[114] One way to begin a rehabilitation of the U.S.-Saudi security partnership would be through increased contact via the USMTM. The Saudis gain the benefit of both increased military readiness as a result of increased training and maintenance and the knowledge that the United States remains committed to providing for the external security of the Kingdom.

For the United States, there are additional implications from the successes (or failures) of the al-Saud to adequately address the Kingdom's security challenges to consider. In 2002 Saudi Arabia was the largest supplier of crude oil to the United States, providing just over 1.5 million of the 9.1 million barrels imported every day.[115] Today they are still one of the top three suppliers of crude oil to the United States. A reduction of Saudi production could negatively impact the U.S. directly and indirectly. A loss of exports from the Kingdom would have to be made up for by buying on the world spot market, a task which, in and of itself, could lead to a slight increase in prices for refined petroleum products (i.e., gasoline).

The indirect, yet far more serious impact would come from the reduction of crude available to the global economy. Saudi oil remains central to the global oil market and is expected to become even more vital in the future. U.S. oil imports from outside the Middle East will not change this fact. The United States and the other major oil importers in Western Europe and increasingly, South and East Asia are all part of a single, seamless oil market driven by supply and demand, and global demand for oil has risen steadily

---

[114] James A. Russell, "Deconstructing the U.S.-Saudi Partnership?" *Strategic Insights* 1, no. 7, (September 2002) http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/sept02/middleEast2.asp (March 2004).
[115] Energy Information Agency, "Imports of Crude Oil into the United States by Country of Origin, 2002" http://www.eia.doe.gov/neic/rankings/crudebycountry.htm (March 2004).

over the last several decades. Oil currently accounts for 40 percent of global energy consumption and is expected to rise from 75 million barrels a day in 2000 to 100 million barrels a day by 2015.[116]

U.S. policy regarding the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is another issue of concern. A perception by Riyadh that the U.S. guarantee to ensure Saudi Arabia's external security, the foundation of Saudi security policy for the last 50 years, can no longer be counted on would force Riyadh to look elsewhere for security assurances. No other foreign power has the capability at the present to provide such an assurance. This realization might force Riyadh to look at acquiring a WMD capability to mitigate external security threats. From the U.S. point of view, a shift to such a policy would be considered potentially destabilizing for the region and could force Washington into a situation where it might have to take military action against a former ally.

For now, it appears the United States still has a vested interest in the ability of the al-Saud to meet their future security challenges. Both Riyadh and Washington would be better served in the future by a reaffirmation of the security partnership that has been the bedrock of U.S.-Saudi relations for the last 50 years. Washington, through a policy of positive engagement, will be better equipped to help the al-Saud manage a period in the history of the Kingdom where difficult choices will have to be made to ensure the long term viability of the Saudi state.

---

[116] "Global Trends 2015: A Dialogue About the Future With Nongovernment Experts" (Washington DC:, National Intelligence Council, December 2000), 28.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF REFREFENCES

Badeeb, Saeed M. *Saudi-Iranian Relations: 1932-1982*. London: Centre for Arab and
    Iranian Studies, 1993.

Bourland, Brad. "The Saudi Economy: 2000 Performance, 2001 Forecast" *Saudi
    American Bank*
    http://www.samba.com.sa/investment/economywatch/pdf/SaudiEconomy2000.pdf
    (March 2004).

Bowers, Faye. "How an Al-Qaeda Hotbed Turned Inhospitable" *Christian Science
    Monitor*, 8 January 2004 http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0108/p01s04-
    wome.html (March 2004).

Chubin, Shahram and Charles Tripp. *Iran-Saudi Arabia: Relations and Regional Order*.
    Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Cordesman, Anthony H. "Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal
    Security Dimension Part I. Saudi Strategic Challenges" Draft Document. *Center
    for Strategic and International Studies*, 30 October 2002
    http://csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_01.pdf (March 2004)

Doran, Michael Scott. "The Saudi Paradox." *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 1 (Jan/Feb 2004):
    35-51.

Embassy of the United States of America Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. "Warden Message." 3
    May 2003 http://riyadh.usembassy.gov/wwwusc21.doc (March 2004)

Energy Information Agency, "Imports of Crude Oil into the United States by Country of
    Origin, 2002." http://www.eia.doe.gov/neic/rankings/crudebycountry.htm (March
    2004)

Fandy, Mamoon *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*. New York: Palgrave, 1999.

"Global Trends 2015: A Dialogue About the Future With Nongovernment Experts."
    Washington DC: National Intelligence Council, December 2000

Goldberg, Jacob. *The Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia: The Formative Years, 1902-1918*.
    Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press,
    1986.

Gordon, Michael R. and Bernard E.Trainor. *The General's War: The Inside Story of the
    Conflict in the Gulf*. Boston, New York, London: Little, Brown and Company,
    1995.

51

Hart, Parker T. *Saudi Arabia and the United States: Birth of a Security Partnership*. Bloominton & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998.

Hardy, Roger, "Saudi's War on the 'Enemy Within'" *BBC News*, 9 November 2003 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3255357.stm (March 2004).

Henderson, Simon. *After King Fahd: Succession in Saudi Arabia*. Washington DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1994.

Holden, David, and Richard Johns. *The House of Saud: The Rise and Rule of the Most Powerful Dynasty in the Arab World*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981.

"Jane's Security Sentinel Assessment – The Gulf States." 12 August 2003 http://www.janes.com (March 2004)

Kechichian, Joseph A. "Trends in Saudi National Security." *Middle East Journal* 53, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 232-253.

Kechichian, Joesph A. *Succession in Saudi Arabia*. New York: Palgrave, 2001

Lacey, Robert. *The Kingdom*. New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981.

Litwak, Robert. *Security in the Persian Gulf 2: Sources of Interstate Conflict*. New Jersey: Allenheld, Osmun & Co for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981.

Long, David E. *The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001.

Looney, Robert E., "Factors Affecting Employment in the Arabian Gulf Region, 1975-85." *International Journal of Social Economics*, 19, no. 2 (1992): 43-47

Looney, Robert E., "Development Strategies for Saudi Arabia: Escaping the Rentier State Syndrome." *Strategic Insights* 3, no. 3 (March 2004) http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2004/mar/looneyMar04.asp (March 2004).

MacAskill, Ewen and Ian Traynor "Saudi's Consider Nuclear Bomb" *The Guardian*, 18 September 2003 http://www.guardian.co.uk/saudi/story/0,11599,1044402,00.html (December, 2003).

"New Saudi Body to Oversee Charity" *BBC News*, 28 February 2004 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3496734.stm (March 2004).

Okruhlik, Gwenn, "Saudi Arabian-Iranian Relations: External Rapprochement and Internal Consolidation." *Middle East Policy* 10, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 113-125.

"People Pressure." *Economist.com*, 21 March 2002 http://www.economist.com/printedition/PrinterFriendly.cfm?Story_ID=1033986 (September 2003).

"Perle: Saudis qualify for 'Axis of Evil'" *Middle East Online*, 12 January 2004 http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=8460 (March 2004).

Philby, Harry St. John, *Sa'udi Arabia*. New York: Fredrick A. Praeger, 1955.

Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, *World Population Prospects: The 2002 Revision* and *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2001 Revision*, http://esa.un.org/unpp (March 2004).

"Riyadh Bombing Appalls Arab Press." *BBC News,* 10 November 2003 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3256823.stm (March 2004).

Russell, James A., "Deconstructing the U.S.-Saudi Partnership?" *Strategic Insights* 1, no. 7 (September 2002) http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/sept02/middleEast2.asp (March 2004).

"Saudi Arabia and Iran: The Security Agreement is on April 15" *Arabic News.com*, 2 April 2001 at http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/010402/2001040217.html (March 2004).

Saudi Arabian Information Resource. "Arabs should have final say on Iraq" 25 December 2002 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y5110.htm (March 2004).

Saudi Arabia Information Resource. "Crown Prince Abdullah addresses the nation on Riyadh explosions" 13 May 2003 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y5720.htm (March 2004).

Saudi Arabian Information Resource. "Interior Ministry announces names of wanted suspects" 6 December 2003 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y6450.htm (March 2004).

Saudi Arabian Information Resource. "Prince Khalid bin Sultan stresses preparedness of Saudi forces" 15 March 2003 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y5512.htm (March 2004).

Saudi Arabia Information Resource. "Prince Nayef announces arrest of 11 terrorist suspects" 28 May 2003 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y5760.htm (March 2004).

Saudi Arabian Information Resource. "Prince Saud meets President Bush" 31 January 2003 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y5314.htm (March 2004).

Saudi Arabian Information Resource. "Saudi Arabia will not take part in war on Iraq" 19 March 2003 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y5532.htm (March 2004).

Saudi Arabia Information Resource. "Saudi Cabinet weekly meeting" 11 November 2003 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y6331.htm (March 2004).

Saudi Arabia Information Resource. "Saudi security authorities abort attempted terrorist attack" 7 May 2003 http://www.saudinf.com/main/y5703.htm (March 2004).

Saudi Arabian Information Resource. "Water Resources" http://www.saudinf.com/main/a54.htm (August 2003).

Saudi Arabian Ministry of Economy and Planning. "Seventh Development Plan" http://www.planning.gov.sa/PLANNING/Drive_A/7CONTe.htm (March 2004).

"Saudi Arabia: What Happened?" *BBC News*, 13 May 2003 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3024375.stm (March 2004).

"Saudi Police Arrest Bomb Suspects" *BBC News*, 11 November 2003 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3261809.stm (March 2004).

"Saudis tell Bush: take a breather, give UN another try" *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 March 2003 http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/03/23/1048354475569.html (March 2004).

Shetty, Shobha, "Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Future Vision of the Saudi Economy Agriculture and Water Resources Management: Issues and Options" (paper presented at the Symposium on the Future Vision of the Saudi Economy in the Year 2020, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, October 2002) http://www.futurevision2020.co.uk/notes.html (August 2003).

Smith, Craig, "Saudis Worry as They Waste Their Scarce Water" *New York Times*, 26 January 2003, sec. 1, p. 4.

Taecker, Kevin Rollin, "Myths And Realities About Unemployment in Saudi Arabia" *The Saudi-American Forum* http://www.saudi-american-forum.org/Newsletters/SAF_Essay_11.htm (March 2004).

"UK's Fresh Saudi Terror Warning" *BBC News*, 29 November 2003 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3249434.stm (March 2004).

U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, "Patterns of Global Terrorism – 1995 Middle East Overview" April 1996 http://www.terrorismcentral.com/Library/Government/US/StateDepartment/CounterterrorismOffice/patterns/1995/MiddleEastOverview.html (March 2004).

"US forces around Iraq" *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 March 2003 http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/03/18/1047749778149.html (March 2004).

"US Warns of More Possible Attacks in Saudi" *Middle East Online*, 12 December 2003 http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=8001 (March 2004).

"Water Industries Market in Saudi Arabia" UK Trade and Investment Website http://www.tradepartners.gov.uk/water/saudi_arabia/profile/overview.shtml (November 2003).

"Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East: Iran" Center for Nonproliferation Studies Monterey Institute for International Studies http://www.cns.miis.edu/research/wmdme/iran.htm (March 2004).

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

1.   Defense Technical Information Center
        Ft. Belvoir, Virginia

2.   Dudley Knox Library
        Naval Postgraduate School
        Monterey, California